
BLACK AND BROWN

AFRICAN AMERICANS
and the
MEXICAN REVOLUTION, 1910–1920



GERALD HORNE

Black and Brown

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Contents

	<i>Preface</i>	vii
	Introduction	I
1	Before the Revolution	12
2	A Tale of Two Negroes	25
3	Bordering on Revolution	46
4	A Border Drenched in Blood	69
5	Buffaloed Soldiers	88
6	Black and Brown Defenders of White Supremacy?	110
7	Negroes Invade Mexico	133
8	“Kill the ‘Gringo’ Men!”	156
	Epilogue: Revolution Delayed	181
	<i>Notes</i>	193
	<i>Index</i>	253
	<i>About the Author</i>	275

Preface

This is *not* a book about Mexicans of African descent,¹ a subject certainly worth writing about; it concerns African Americans—that is, those of African descent who resided north of Mexico—and their encounter with the Revolution. Indeed, this book is primarily and overwhelmingly about African Americans, other topics being in service of this goal. It proceeds both chronologically and topically. Thus readers may want to turn to particular chapters to sample particular issues:

Chapter 1 concerns the early involvement between U.S. Negroes and Mexico. U.S. slavery and Mexican abolitionism made for a contentious relationship and contributed to Mexico's loss of Texas and the war of 1846, and the loss of California. After the U.S. Civil War Negroes made a number of organized efforts to settle south of the border in an attempt to escape persecution and seize opportunity.

Chapter 2 expands upon the respective roles of Jack Johnson and Henry O. Flipper. Johnson's bold alliance with Mexican revolutionaries was a precursor to Paul Robeson's alliance with the Soviet Union, the Nation of Islam's ties to Japan, and Martin Luther King's inspiration from India. Flipper, on the other hand, was firmly in the tradition of the Negro who stays true to the United States, no matter the provocation or the insult.

Chapter 3 concerns the experience of African Americans scattered along the two-thousand-mile border between the United States and Mexico stretching from southern California to southern Texas. As a “minority” among “minorities,” African Americans certainly faced discrimination but the bigotry was absorbed also by those of Mexican descent, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. This created an opportunity for some Negroes, leading scholars to conclude that they were constructed as “white” in pockets of this borderland. In addition, though the influence of socialism on U.S. Negroes has been adequately sketched, less attention has been paid to the impact of the other powerful ideology of that era: anarchism. Spurred by the impetus created by the Revolution and World War I, the NAACP enjoyed tremendous growth during this era. One of their key leaders—John Shillady—was a product of the anarchist movement, which had deep roots in Mexico.

Chapter 4 deals with the shocking level of violence in the borderlands, especially Texas, notably antiblack depredations. A striking and telling point was the murderous beating of NAACP leader John Shillady in Austin, and ever more gruesome lynchings throughout the state. Complicating this picture was the presence of armed Negro troopers—uncommon in the South as a whole—who were supposedly tasked to deter attacks from Mexico and still restive Native Americans; however, they were not unwilling to enforce equality at gunpoint.

Chapter 5 deals with the Negroes who were a battering ram against Native American sovereignty in helping to “win the West”—the “Buffalo Soldiers.” In 1916 they invaded Mexico in search of Pancho Villa after his raid in Columbus, New Mexico—and were soundly defeated at Carrizal in what W. E. B. Du Bois termed a “fool’s errand.” This was occurring as the United States geared up to enter World War I, thus stretching to the limits the nation’s military capacity, and ultimately leaving the United States in the unsustainable position of being heavily dependent on blacks to defend a land of white supremacy.

Simultaneously, as chapter 6 suggests, in the South—where the bulk of Negroes continued to reside—many among this “minority” were fleeing conscription en masse and migrating north into the maw of urban anonymity. This is a largely neglected reason behind the “Great Migration” of this era—a mass movement that transformed rural Negroes into urbanites, with consequences that are still being tolled. The plight of “Spanish American” troopers in the Southwest was similar to that of their Negro brethren but because some possessed a “white phenotype” and had

Mexican roots (a nation that was not indifferent to their situation) they were a different kind of “minority” than the Negro.

Chapter 7 expands upon the travails of the “Buffalo Soldiers,” notably their invasion of Mexico in 1916 in the aforementioned futile hunt for Villa. A number were killed, while others were taken prisoner as the invaders left Mexico empty-handed. However, their marauding was celebrated in the United States, and their display of belligerence seemed to bring Negroes ever closer to first-class citizenship. This chapter also examines the defection of a number of African Americans who chose to fight on behalf of Mexico, and the duplicitous activities of some whom I term ironically “African American,” namely, “whites” from South Africa, with no evident “racial” sensitivity, who found themselves sharing a trench with U.S. Negroes unfaithful to Washington.

Chapter 8 is about the “Plan of San Diego” and related efforts by Mexico, together with Germany and Japan, to cultivate African Americans as allies within the United States. This created an enormous national security problem for Washington and ultimately eroded white supremacy as the United States sought to insure that Negroes would not be attracted to the nation’s antagonists. Further, the existence of militant “race-based” movements among U.S. Negroes and Mexicans, assisted by foreign powers, created powerful momentum for the formation of militant “class-based” movements (e.g., the Communist Party) among Euro-Americans to whom they seemed a reasonable alternative and foil.

The epilogue brings this story full circle, from the period since the Revolution to the present, tracing the momentous relationship between those of African and Mexican descent. Mexico has continued to be a site of exile for African Americans, as the presence there of one of this nation’s greatest artists—Elizabeth Catlett—well attests. Simultaneously, the continued migration of Mexican workers to the United States provides new challenges and opportunities for the nation and African Americans alike.²

In a real sense the inspiration for this book was sparked during my childhood. My older sister—Mary Horne Young—with whom I collaborated on a number of books, was also a linguist of no small note. Having resided in Germany, Turkey, Colombia, and South Korea she knew the predominant languages of these nations as well as a number of Native American languages. Her knowledge of Spanish in particular inspired me to study this beautiful language. Unfortunately, she passed away recently. This book is dedicated to her memory.

Preface

While conducting research in Mexico City, I was helped by Cindy Hawes and Maria del Rocio Perez Cadena. Angela Gilliam, Alma Stevenson, Diana Arnhalt, and Roman Padilla were also helpful. As with all the books I have written of late, Walter Hill of the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, has been of extraordinary assistance to me and has become a good friend. Numerous other archives and libraries were consulted in the course of researching this book. Foremost among them have been the Rio Grande Historical Collections of New Mexico State University; the Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico; the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives in Santa Fe; the University of Texas, Austin; the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; the University of Texas, El Paso; the El Paso County Historical Society; the El Paso Public Library; the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research; the California State Archives and California State Library of Sacramento; the San Diego Historical Society; the Huntington Library in San Marino, California; the Arizona State Library, Archives and Office of Public Records in Phoenix; the Arizona Historical Society in Tucson; the University of Arizona; the Library of Congress; and state archives in Wisconsin, New Jersey, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Particularly helpful was the archive in Mexico City of the Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores.

I have been fortunate to have been associated with leading scholars in this general field, including John Mason Hart of the University of Houston and Zaragoza Vargas of the University of California, Santa Barbara. I have also been influenced by the works of James Sandos, Benjamin Johnson, Juan Gomez Quiñones, Rodolfo Acuña, Kevin Mulroy, Helen Delpar, Garna Christian, William Loren Katz, Emilio Zamora, and Jeff Perry, among others.

A good deal of this book was written while I was associated with the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. The library there and at Duke University were of immeasurable assistance in researching this book. As is evident, the ultimate inspiration for this book was the heroic courage and labor of the peoples of the borderlands, who still have many stories to share with researchers and writers.

Introduction

Jack Johnson was smiling. Why the burly black boxer would be mirthful was unclear. After all, here he was at the border between Tijuana, Mexico,¹ and southern California about to surrender to the U.S. authorities after avoiding their clutches for years. A prison term was sure to follow and in 1920 an African American—even a celebrity like the former heavyweight champion—could hardly expect a bacchanalian revel behind bars. Palm trees swayed lazily in the summer breezes nearby and ocean waves crashed on the beach as Johnson, in a well-appointed automobile, approached the boundary between Mexico and the United States. He exited the car, shook hands with several Mexican officials, no doubt thanking them for the lavish hospitality he had enjoyed from their government in recent months. Motion picture cameras whirled and still cameras clicked, seeking to capture this exceptional event for posterity. Spectators watched. Then he walked slowly to the U.S. Customs House, presented his passport to an eagerly awaiting official, and stepped across the border onto U.S. soil.² Somewhat disingenuously, he told the assembly, “The Mexican Government had issued no deportation order against me, as was reported some weeks ago, and I could have remained in Tijuana as long as I was willing to obey the laws of Lower California. But for a long time I wanted to return and get my troubles adjusted.”³

As his feet hit the ground on the land of his birth, the curtain came down on a remarkable decade and a striking epoch in which African Americans had sought to take advantage of the extraordinary ripples of change unleashed by the Mexican Revolution in 1910.

Belying his image as an insouciant bon vivant, Johnson was in the vanguard of this trend. As recently as 1919, as his homeland was rocked by anarchist bombings and “race riots,” Johnson contributed to the sense of nervous apprehension by placing ads in black newspapers. “Jack Johnson’s Land Company,” based in Mexico City, extended the following enticing invitation: “Colored People. You who are lynched, tortured, mobbed, persecuted and discriminated against in the boasted ‘Land of Liberty.’ . . . OWN A HOME IN MEXICO where one man is as good as another and it is not your nationality that counts but simply you!” The price was reasonable—“5.00 an acre and up”—but “best of all there is [no] ‘race prejudice’ in Mexico and in fact, severe punishment is meted out to those who discriminate against a man because of his color or race. Neither is there censorship, espionage or conscription.”⁴ These were heady claims with more than a touch of exaggeration. Yet African Americans reeling from pogroms and medieval punishments could hardly ignore these alluring words. Likewise, the U.S. authorities, who were beginning to view their southern neighbor with unease as a vector for subversion, also had to pay attention.

Though Johnson, like his successors Joe Louis and Muhammad Ali, was wildly popular among his fellow African Americans, his solidarity with revolutionaries in Mexico by no means represented the full spectrum of opinion among Negroes. His putative polar opposite, Henry O. Flipper, stood assuredly on the other side of the barricades. The first black man to graduate from West Point, he was a dedicated “Indian fighter” in the “Wild West.”⁵ Like Johnson, he too symbolized U.S. weakness during the Revolution in that Washington was unduly dependent on full-time black soldiers—and mostly white part-time volunteers in the National Guard—a troublesome combination for a nation grounded in white supremacy.⁶ Like Johnson, he too flouted rigorously enforced social norms by initiating an intimate relationship with a Euro-American woman. Just as this faux pas led to criminal charges and exile for Johnson, it led to Flipper being drummed out of the military—at least, that was his opinion and that of his many avid supporters.⁷

But unlike Johnson, Flipper continued to make himself useful to the U.S. authorities. A fluent Spanish-speaker, he became an expert witness in

elaborate court cases leading to the dispossession of the land of Mexican Americans in the Southwest. He was the “nation’s first prominent black civil and mining engineer”⁸ and assisted budding U.S. transnational corporations in extracting wealth from Mexico. And he became a noted spy against revolutionary forces in Mexico and a trusted aide of Senator Albert Fall of New Mexico, he of the massive scandal that was to be known as “Teapot Dome.” Flipper was the archetype of the fervently patriotic Negro even as he is being flayed by his nation’s blood-soaked flag.

Unlike Othello, Flipper’s service to the state was eventually honored. President Bill Clinton pardoned him, clearing him of the charges of speculation that ostensibly led to his being ousted from the military.⁹ The decision by the U.S. Postal Service to honor him was endorsed by then Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, a Georgian like Flipper.¹⁰ Colin Powell “kept a photo of Flipper on his wall while serving as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.”¹¹

Johnson had epicurean tastes and was attracted to radical positions, while Flipper was a man of rectitude and stiff-necked patriotism. Not only do the two present contrasting black images. They also illustrate how essential the much reviled Negroes had become to U.S. national security, no matter how this phrase was interpreted. Just as actual and presumed antagonists of Washington such as Mexico, Japan, and Germany looked longingly to African Americans as potential allies, soldiers like Flipper steadfastly defended their homeland at a time when “slackers” were hiding in the bushes.

To be sure, given that the United States was embroiled in armed conflict in places ranging from Mexico to Europe to Asia in the second decade of the twentieth century, the reluctance of many men to enroll in the military was understandable, particularly immigrants faced with the difficult choice of wielding weapons against their former homelands. But unlike the battlefields in Europe and Asia, the Revolution that rocked Mexico was on the doorstep of the United States; it inflamed the border and led to the deaths of countless U.S. citizens. This Revolution, which dislodged the long-time rule of Porfirio Diaz, was also due in no small part to the machinations of the United States. Relations between the United States and Mexico “cooled considerably near the finale of the Porfiriato,” as Diaz’s lengthy rule was termed. For “in an attempt to regain his waning popularity, Diaz suddenly adopted a nationalistic stance than ran counter to American interests.”¹² But the most fruitful opportunities for Negroes, and the greatest challenges to the United States, resulted

from the rise to leadership of Venustiano Carranza in Mexico late in the revolutionary decade.

Moreover, the need to rely on Negro troopers was heightened by the fact that in the border areas, where those of Mexican origin resided in large numbers, the U.S. authorities could not rely on Latinos to confront Mexico, if need be. Or so they thought. In New Mexico, for example, the Attorney General was concerned that "Old Mexico Mexicans" may not stand with Washington.¹³ Earlier, the Attorney General with some exasperation confessed that "the authorities in Washington of course cannot quite appreciate the conditions under which we are laboring down here. The southern part of the state"—the border region—"is composed chiefly of native and old Mexico Mexicans whose loyalty to the United States is a matter of doubt in some quarters" and "causes our people to be extremely uneasy at the present time. . . . I have made a close study of the situation and I feel perfectly sure if the Mexicans in old Mexico as a whole start war against the United States that we will have a number of Mexicans in New Mexico who will try to join them."¹⁴

New Mexico's worry was Mexico's joy. The Consul of the latter in El Paso, Texas, boasted in 1914 that those of Mexican descent in Arizona and New Mexico were offering "emphatically" to "take up arms" against the United States. The Consul General in San Francisco concurred, as did his counterpart in Phoenix. These Mexicans had "rifles" and "pistols" they were eager to use to defend Mexico, he thought. Today the numbers of those who appeared ready to oppose the United States seem rather high—"10,000" in Brownsville, "8,000" in San Antonio, "20,000" in El Paso, and "10,000" in Phoenix.¹⁵ Whatever the case, Washington could not risk the possibility that this was empty verbiage and had to rely even more on its African American troops who, unlike those of Mexican origin and some European immigrants, did not have an allegiance to the real or imagined foes of Washington. Their importance was enhanced further by the fact that in many border counties those of Mexican origin far outnumbered those who were not.

As one scholar has put it, "Mexico figured as the prototype of American business and economic expansion into the underdeveloped world,"¹⁶ forming a template for later ventures in Korea and Vietnam, Chile and Cuba, Congo and Angola. Consequently, it was feared at that time that revolutionary transformation in Mexico could decisively impact critical

and profitable U.S. investments in the oil and mining sectors, which underscored further the need for Negro troops.

During the dramatic decade of the Revolution, the Mexico that Flipper and Johnson encountered was a country of about 15 million scattered sparsely over a vast area equal to the United States east of the Mississippi. With tremendous mountain ranges and long coastal lowlands, hot southern jungles and a burning northern desert, a great temperate central plateau cut by gorges hundreds of feet deep, Mexico was enchanting, beautiful, and formidable. It was a land of arid agriculture and rich mines, not to mention gushing petroleum. The then Marxist exile Charles Shipman, who was an acquaintance of Johnson, described his adopted homeland as a place “of the lone horseman, the ox-turned treadmill, the hand-guided wooden plow and (incomparable beast of burden) the burro. Peopled essentially by Indians and part-Indians, most of them poor, ragged and illiterate—born to oppression.”¹⁷ The Revolution—a rending upheaval of mass movements marked by profound anticlericalism, far-reaching land reform, deep-seated hostility to U.S. imperialism, and democratic promise—was a direct response to this oppression. According to one analyst, this volcanic eruption “resulted in one million deaths through combat, starvation and disease.” Mexico’s population was said to be 15.1 million in 1910, but only 14.3 million in 1921. “At least 300,000 but some estimate as many as one million Mexicans fled to the United States,”¹⁸ bolstering a Mexican American population that was to ally with and, at times, cross swords with, African Americans in urban areas such as Los Angeles.

The ouster of the government of Porfirio Díaz at the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century also ushered in a period of instability with frequent regime changes and challenges from guerilla and peasant movements led by Pancho Villa in the north and Emiliano Zapata in the south. The Mexican Revolution was the first great radical transformation of a society in the twentieth century. Virginia Woolf famously insisted that “on or about December 1910 . . . human character changed.”¹⁹ Woolf’s verbal extravagance also speaks to the profound metamorphosis that was the Mexican Revolution, which was inaugurated as she made her solemn pronouncement. More to the point, Booker T. Washington claimed that he had “never seen the colored people so discouraged and bitter” as they were “in the summer of 1913.”²⁰

Inevitably, disgruntled African Americans began to take a new look at Mexico as it captured front-page headlines during the era of Woolf and

Washington. The Mexican Revolution demonstrated to Negroes—just as the Civil War had—that no government was necessarily eternal. The social explosion across the border created opportunities for them to address frontally and forcefully the oppression of white supremacy in the United States, which had led them to become discouraged and bitter.

That Mexico would serve as a beacon of hope for Negroes was not new. During the antebellum era thousands of enslaved Africans fled to freedom across the border, as Mexico had abolished slavery long before the United States. As this capital flight enraged powerful slave owners and complicated diplomatic relations with Mexico, the latter realized that collaborating with Negroes might be mutually profitable.²¹

Actually, Mexico was not alone in recognizing the benefit of making a special appeal to the dispossessed. In 1836 James Dickson, a “poet-propagandist for the Texas revolution,” sought to knock together an “Indian Liberating Army” that would set up a vast secessionist realm in the present-day southwest United States where “only Indians could own land.” This compelled John Quincy Adams “to deliver a geopolitical analysis on the floor of Congress, which he then wrote out for newspaper and pamphlet distribution. . . . [H]e warned that the United States risked a multi-front war with Seminoles and fugitive slaves in Florida; Mexico had reason to ally with Indians on the western border; and over all loomed the possibility that European powers might intervene. The United States would find itself fighting a ‘Mexican, Indian, Negro and English war.’” Adams’s words struck a chord in Mexico where his speech was “received as a global statement supporting their cause against U.S. expansion. They distributed a pamphlet translation.” As in the 1910–1920 era, Adams’s “strategic vision operated in combination with his Yankee patriotism to suggest that Congress, if it was to head off the interethnic and international threat, might have to use its war powers to mobilize [the] Black population in the U.S. interest—that is, as elements in the modern, New English [sic] social revolution for which he was a long term spokesman.”²²

Driven to sympathy with the Negroes, Adams wound up defending enslaved Africans who had engineered a bloody revolt on the ship *Amistad*. In similar fashion, the United States itself was compelled to make “racial” reforms in order to undercut the subversive appeals of Jack Johnson and Mexico and their German and Japanese allies. Something similar occurred again during the Cold War when national security concerns led once more to “racial” reform.²³

Historically, the fractious United States, a settler state knocked together by sullen slaves, dispossessed indigenous peoples, and European and Asian immigrants with ties of various levels of intensity to their homelands, faced grave national security concerns. Negroes and advocates for Indians were not the only domestic constituencies who sensed that the border might be the Achilles heel of an increasingly powerful United States. After the Civil War, embittered Confederates fled to Mexico where they helped prop up the puppet regime of Maximilian installed by France, which likewise saw an advantage in pressuring the United States from the border. During the war, the Confederates sought vainly to forge a deal with Mexico in order to undercut Washington. The celebrated Virginian, Matthew Fontaine Maury, “engaged in a long series of negotiations with Emperor Napoleon of France and the Archduke Maximilian of Austria concerning the separation of California from the United States and its restoration to Mexico as a reward for French intervention on the side of the South.”²⁴ Negro soldiers again rode to the rescue of the United States. George Washington Williams, a budding historian fresh from dispatching the Confederacy into oblivion, “received a commission as lieutenant in the First Battery from the state of Tamaulipas.” By helping to oust the puppet regime from power he removed the possibility of a Confederate “contra” base along the border, bolstered by European powers. He was not alone.²⁵

The idea of retaking the lands seized by the United States from Mexico during the 1846 war reemerged during the Revolution. The bold and breathtaking “Plan of San Diego,” apparently backed by Germany and Japan, suggested depriving the United States of these lands (including Texas and California), establishing independent Negro and Native American republics in their stead, and, not least, liquidating the Euro-American male population there. The “Zimmerman Telegram” purportedly revealed yet another plan by Mexico, in league with Germany, to retake lands earlier snatched by the United States during the mid-nineteenth-century war.²⁶

These brazen and daring notions were prefigured in the minds of black fiction writers. In 1913, *The Crisis*, the official journal of the NAACP, edited by W. E. B. Du Bois, published a story about a Jack Johnson-type figure pressed to join Washington in resisting a takeover by Mexico, aided by Japan: “Already the Orientals, through their secret treaties with Mexico, were at the beginning of things. The American consulate in Mexico City had been damaged; several Americans in Mexico had been imprisoned, tortured and killed; shots, always ‘random shots,’ had been fired

across the border into the United States, wounding our citizens and destroying property; then began the desertion of our Negro soldiers to Mexican ranks. There these trained men of a race never before disloyal to their land or flag, manned the machine guns for the ‘Mexicans.’” “Disloyalty” was “spreading among the Negro troops.” Though fictional, this scenario could not fail to resonate in a nation heavily dependent on such troops at a time when Mexico was talking about forging an alliance with Japan and Germany, while an overstretched United States was about to contemplate sending even more troops to Europe.²⁷

Negroes were complaining and quoting Kipling: “It’s Tommy this and Tommy that . . . and chuck him out, the Brute. But it’s please to walk in front, sir, when the guns begin to shoot.”²⁸ Riding to the rescue was Jed Blackburn, “the discredited Negro prize fighter.” Negroes were demanding “justice” in exchange for defending the United States. Even Blackburn was reluctant at first. “‘What!’ roared the scowling giant. ‘Fight for this country?’ Then Japan bombarded San Francisco. Then San Diego. Finally, he led a 200,000 strong Negro army to repel the invasion—and the nation was saved.”²⁹ There was something in the air that prefigured the “Plan of San Diego” and impelled thoughts of Negro subversion and sedition.

With every passing day it was becoming increasingly evident that the combination of Mexico—hostile toward Washington, not least because of the 1846 war and the perceived dominance by U.S. investors of the Mexican economy—and a battered Negro population across the border with unresolved grievances, had created a combustible situation. It was ironic that the force standing between the annihilation of Euro-Americans and the machinations of their protagonists were Negro troops who had proved their mettle by subduing Native Americans and who were now being asked to repel attacks from Mexico.³⁰

Because the soldiers—even Negro soldiers—were armed, they were a potent symbol of authority in the dankest precincts of Jim Crow such as the former Confederate state of Texas and the Southwest generally. Some Negro soldiers in Columbus, New Mexico (site of a raid by Pancho Villa, one of the most devastating attacks on the U.S. mainland before 11 September 2001) “and black women ran into whites on sidewalks and forced them to yield the right of way in order to avoid trouble.” In this topsy-turvy world, there were “white women passing as black to avoid local or military mores on race-mixing.”³¹ In 1917, as the awesome prospect of the United States entering the European war combined with anxiety about the dangers to the South, some Negro soldiers in Houston responded to

Jim Crow by using their arms and leaving a number of dead whites in their wake. According to one historian, this helped to revive “ancient fears of Nat Turner and John Brown”³² and, like John Quincy Adams decades earlier, convinced the sober-minded that white supremacy could not rule in the old way. In short, it contributed to what I have elsewhere termed the “general crisis of white supremacy,”³³ wherein racism was increasingly unable to work its magic, not least because those who suffered its perpetual indignity were unwilling to accept its dictates.

Thus, prior to the Houston tragedy the Arizona authorities decided that the better part of wisdom “would advise against [exhibition] of *Birth of a Nation* in this state at the present time.”³⁴ This racist film, which glorified the Ku Klux Klan, was endorsed by President Woodrow Wilson and electrified countless Euro-Americans, could not be wholeheartedly embraced in this southwestern state that was on edge and still relied on Negro troops to repress still restive Native Americans and threats from Mexico. George H. Smalley, secretary of the state’s Council of Defense told Miles Merrill, President of the Loyalty League in Bisbee, where Negro troops could be useful in controlling rebellious miners, that he could “only express my personal sympathy with your movement to suppress the presentation of the *Birth of the [sic] Nation* in view of the Colored Boys’ prompt response for service in their country’s war crisis.”³⁵ A few years later, a significant victory against white supremacy took place in the sprawling border town of El Paso, Texas, as the “white primary”—which severely vitiated black voting rights—was successfully challenged in the U.S. Supreme Court.³⁶

El Paso proved to be a critical battleground during the Revolution. Sitting adjacent to Juarez, Mexico, it contained a burgeoning population of Mexican descent and a growing community of African Americans. There the two groups developed ties of singular intimacy. As early as 1893 Negro men engaged in militant protest against enforcement of a state law against miscegenation that would have complicated the lives of all those who had married women of Mexican descent, who were defined as “white.”³⁷

Negroes also had a ringside seat as the Revolution unfolded a stone’s throw from their homes years later. Frances Hills was born in 1925 but she recalled later that at her “old house on 1101 Park Avenue [in El Paso] there were holes where Pancho Villa’s shots from over in Mexico had landed over here. . . . That was during my mother’s lifetime that that happened because she was aware of that. She talked to me about it.”³⁸ It was difficult for Negroes to remain indifferent to the Revolution as bullets whizzed by

West Texas. They pondered the momentous developments unfolding in Mexico and determined what it all meant—and acted accordingly.

Though the Mexican guerilla leader Pancho Villa was vilified relentlessly in Washington—in terms similar to those used today to describe Osama bin Laden—he became something of a folk hero among many Negroes. A Negro pastor in Baltimore claimed that Villa was “his brother.” He said that his own father was a “slave; that his grandfather was a white man and that from pictures he has seen of Villa there can be no doubt about the relationship.”³⁹ No, no, said another interlocutor. True, Villa was an “American Negro” but he was a “former member of the Tenth U.S. Cavalry” of the heralded “Buffalo Soldiers,” “none other than George Golsby.” The erudite “Professor Frederick L. Monsen of New York City, an expert anthropologist” averred, “I have known Villa personally for years. He was my guide for several months while I was making investigations in Mexico. He has Negro blood in his veins.”⁴⁰ Friedrich Katz’s comprehensive biography of Villa acknowledges that he had “crispy kinky black hair of the Negro type.”⁴¹

The Negroes’ fascination with Villa reflected a long-time engagement with Mexico itself. The father of Langston Hughes, the Harlem Bard, was one of many Negroes to escape to Mexico in search of a refuge from Jim Crow. Hughes himself spent a considerable amount of time there, perfecting his fluent Spanish.⁴² In the early 1940s Richard Wright declared that “for a black man Mexico was a welcome haven.”⁴³ The talented bassist Charles Mingus was “born on the border, and grew up near it. He had family from New Mexico that spoke [Spanish] and often said he was Mexican himself.” He spent his declining days in Mexico, died there, and his ashes were “wrapped” in a “box in the kind of Mexican blanket on display at every marketplace in turista Mexico.”⁴⁴

As Jack Johnson was crossing the border northward to face an uncertain fate in a prison cell, Reverend Julius O’Pettigrew of Oklahoma was contacting the Mexican consul in Calexico, California, in the hope of moving southward toward freedom. His family, along with thirty other black families wanted to emigrate to Mexico. Why? The U.S. government did not provide the legal protection he pleaded for. Negroes were subject to countless insults and fraudulent contracts, they were assassinated and lynched and burned like beefsteak on a stake on the merest pretext by those who defined themselves as “white.” They wanted to become Mexican citizens. Rather quickly the consul concluded that his government

Introduction

would permit the entry of all these families, reinforcing Mexico's historic role as a refuge for refugees of all types.⁴⁵ Perhaps Johnson was smiling as he surrendered to the U.S. authorities because he recognized that the Mexican Revolution was of no small moment for a persecuted and tormented African American population.

CHAPTER I

Before the Revolution

The Muslim armies that invaded and occupied Spain and Portugal beginning in 711 included the precursors of African Americans—soldiers from sub-Saharan Africa. Africans, consequently, were a factor in the New World virtually from the onset of Columbus's journey, if not before.¹ Tucson is one of the oldest settlements in the nation now known as the United States. There are "claims that the city is even older than either of the contestants for first honors—Santa Fe and St. Augustine," for "according to authentic records, Marcos de Niza and the Negro, Estevanico, explored Arizona in 1539. . . . We can place the date of Tucson's settlement in 1555."² The noted New Mexican archivist and writer Myra Ellen Jenkins has observed that the famed Pueblo Revolt of 1680, "which drove the Spanish from New Mexico for twelve years," was led by a "Negro, or at least a mulatto."³ Africans figure significantly in the early history of the "land of enchantment." Consider Sebastian Rodriguez, a "pure bred Negro from Africa." The "earliest mention of him is in 1689." "Both of his parents were 'jungle' Negroes [*sic*]" and "might have come to New Spain by way of Brazil; his birthplace, however, was most likely a small river or the name of a district in Luanda [Angola]." A drummer with the military, he became a "town crier" in New Mexico and by 1697 was a major landowner in Santa Fe.⁴

According to Robert Lloyd Carlton, “around 20 percent of the Spanish-Mexican population of Upper California in 1790 had been of part-Negro ancestry.”⁵ “Many of the first settlers of Los Angeles,” says Scott Tadao Kurashige, “came from the Mexican city of Rosario located in the Sinaloa region where people of African descent and mixed ancestry were common.”⁶

As Mexico surged to independence from Spain in the early nineteenth century, those of African descent played a prominent role. “Father Miguel Hidalgo, the first leader of the revolt against Spain, issued several decrees in late 1810 demanding immediate manumission of all slaves on pain of death.”⁷ Theodore G. Vincent writes that the “mule driver Vicente Guerrero was Mexico’s equivalent of the United States’ Washington and Lincoln.” He was a “descendant of the 250,000 to 300,000 African slaves brought to colonial Mexico, he also had indigenous and Spanish roots.” To be sure, the color line in Mexico was not absent but it was not drawn as sharply as in the United States and, in any case, it was directed in the first place toward the indigenous population. Moreover, given ongoing tensions between the United States and Mexico, it made simple good sense for the latter to befriend the most disenchanted residents of the former.

In 1832 the German visitor Carl Christian Beecher compared the legal status of Afro-Mexicans with African Americans. “These blacks,” he said, “as is known, are free in the Republic of Mexico; which is to say, they enjoy, intimately, the same rights as do the rest of the inhabitants of the state, which is not the case in the United States of North America, where, as a result of the laws, or for prejudices, the blacks are humiliated and pressed down to the category of the lowest level of men.”

Guerrero had used “the September 16 independence celebration in 1829 to issue a presidential edict intended to definitely end the institution of slavery. Guerrero had the federal district official, Jose Maria Tormel, write the decree. Tormel had tried for three years to get the Congress of Mexico to definitively abolish slavery so as to discourage the influx of white settlers to Texas from the United States, who set up slave plantations thanks to special contracts and stood apart from the Spanish-speaking Mexicans.”⁸

Mexican officials “had attempted to abolish the slave system gradually through the Colonization Law of 1824, which emancipated slave children on their fourteenth birthdays. Another law in 1832 forbade the further importation of slaves into Texas, but white colonists”—who viewed this maneuver as a threat worthy of secession—“simply ignored this statute in the

face of weak Mexican enforcement.”⁹ According to James SoRelle, these colonists were responsible for the fact that despite stubborn competition, “slavery in Texas was worse than in other states.”

In Texas, where the “Old South” merged seamlessly with the “Wild West,” brutal confrontations occurred between masters and enslaved Africans. But unlike their besieged compatriots elsewhere in the country, the latter had a convenient escape hatch on the border. They found it simpler to escape to the south than to the west or north. Interviewed in 1937, ninety-two-year-old San Antonio resident Felix Haywood, a former slave, chortled, “There was no reason to *run* up north. All we had to do was to *walk* south, and we’d be free as soon as [we] cross[ed] the Rio Grande. In Mexico you could be free.” The former slave Walter Rimm felt similarly. “All we had to do was *walk*, but walk south and we’d be free as soon as we crossed the Rio Grande. In Mexico you could be free,” he added with emphasis. “They didn’t care what color you were, black, white, yellow or blue. Hundreds of slaves did go to Mexico”—actually thousands—“and got on all right. We would hear about them and how they were going to be Mexicans. They brought up their children to speak only Mexican [*sic*].”¹⁰

U.S. slaveholders recognized early on that abolitionism in Mexico was the open backdoor facilitating the massive flight of capital in the form of enslaved Africans. As early as 1833 the authorities of New Orleans contacted the Mexican government about their effort to recover their “property” which had escaped and found refuge south of the border.¹¹ Confederate Texans found it hard to forget that enslaved Africans in that state escaped and fought with Mexico against them and their predecessors during the war of the 1830s.¹²

A century later, the famed Negro journalist J. A. Rogers, in writing of “Vicente Guerrero—Liberator of Mexico,” acknowledged, “It would be interesting to know, however, just how large a part the decree [of emancipation] by this Negro president played in the presence of Texas in the American Union today, for the revolt of Texas from the Mexican republic was clearly inspired by the fact that the temper of the Mexican masses was against slavery.”¹³ Mexico’s reputation as an abolitionist stronghold may explain why the famed black frontiersman Jim Beckwourth was accused of siding with Mexico during the 1846 war.¹⁴

This hearty pioneer was not alone in his presumed pro-Mexican predilections. James N. Leiker is no doubt accurate in writing that “during most of the nineteenth century, African Americans held Mexicans in

higher esteem than other immigrant groups.” “Tejanos even aided run-away slaves by hiding them in homes and churches until they could be shepherded into Coahuila or Tamaulipas.” There was an “overall friendly tone of black-Hispanic interaction.”¹⁵

Because of the threat of contagion posed by “free West Indian, Northern and Latin American sailors, among others, the port of Galveston too required captains to either deny their black sailors shore leave while in port or to place them in jail for the duration of the ship’s visit.” Though Texas had bolted from Mexico, it could not forget that the noted abolitionist Benjamin Lundy, who published the fierce antislavery polemic “The War in Texas” in 1836, “had received permission from Mexican authorities to establish a colony of free Negroes [in Corpus Christi] prior to the Texas Revolution.” As it turned out, slavery—or rather the “freedom” to engage in slavery—was a “primary cause of the Texas Revolution, affected debates regarding the annexation of Texas” by the United States, and “played a considerable role during the Mexican-American war and in Manifest Destiny generally, and, of course, was the reason why Texas joined the Confederacy at the start of the Civil War.”¹⁶

As the Civil War approached, there was powerful incentive for enslaved Africans to flee to the south. In 1857 the inveterate traveler Frederick Law Olmsted quoted a Mexican official saying that the fleeing Negroes “could make money faster than Mexicans themselves could, because they had more sense. [And] the Mexican government was very just to them, [so] they could always have their rights as fully protected as [if] they were Mexican born.” In addition, discrimination against the Indians was a higher priority in Mexico than that against those of African descent, thus creating at least a small opening for opportunity. Still, “Afro-Mexicans,” who often faced more discrimination than arriving U.S. Negroes, sought to “escape the laws of caste in Central Mexico [and] signed on to help settle the wilds of California. There many took important political office after Mexican independence. During the ‘Yankee’ invasion of California in 1847, it was said that the strongest resistance was mounted by Governor Pio Pico and his brother Andres, the zeal for Mexico on the part of these two Afro-Californianos clearly being related to the fears of the type of law the legally racist United States would impose.”¹⁷

It was also the indefatigable Olmsted who recalled during his stay in antebellum Texas that he heard “stories” of the “danger to slavery in the West by the fraternizing of the blacks with the Mexicans. They helped them in all their bad habits, married them, stole a living from them, and ran them

off every day to Mexico.”¹⁸ One of the many reasons for lingering hostility toward those of Mexican origin in Texas was the perception that they were hostile toward slavery. In the 1850s local slaveholders in a Texas neighborhood were infuriated simply because “several Mexican families moved into the vicinity.” They charged that the “Hispanic Texans aided slave runaways and intermingled in a spirit of equality with bondsmen, thus stirring up ‘insubordination.’” Thus “they adopted and enforced extra-legal methods of ridding the community of ‘rascally peons’ as well as curbing the freedom of Austin slaves . . . the vigilantes summarily ejected about twenty families and other Mexican Texans received equally rough treatment the next year.”¹⁹

Certainly, “to many blacks, the words ‘border’ and ‘Mexico’ meant freedom and opportunity.” Texas officials estimated that by 1855 more than four thousand black fugitives, valued at more than \$3.2 million, had entered northern Mexico.²⁰ “By the mid-1850s several Texas counties had passed laws prohibiting Mexicans from communicating with slaves.” In a precursor to the “Plan of San Diego” during the Revolution, Colorado County’s “Anglos hanged three blacks and evicted all Mexicans after uncovering a supposed plot to kill local whites and fight their way to the border.”²¹ This occurred in 1856 as regional tensions over slavery skyrocketed. Reportedly, two hundred enslaved Africans were involved. In addition to liquidating most of the Euro-Americans there, they planned to plunder their homes and then escape with sufficient capital to establish a livelihood. The accused were said to have accumulated pistols, knives, guns, and ammunition.²²

It was in Mexico’s interest to attract U.S. Negroes to their northern border as a firewall against further Euro-American advance; recognizing this, enslaved Africans were inspired to make ever more desperate plans for escape. To say that the border was permeable is an understatement. One reason that there had not been many Negroes in antebellum Brownsville, to cite one example among many, is that before the Civil War slave owners had hesitated to bring their enslaved Africans to such Texas border towns for fear they might scurry across the border.²³ Thousands of enslaved Africans were able to escape into Mexico without trouble because the border, called the Rio Grande in the United States, was little more than a heavy-duty stream. There was “scarcely a bend in [this] river,” said one commentator, that “cannot be forded with the exception of a few feet of swimming.” This also meant that aggressive filibusters from the United States could easily invade Mexico.

In fact, the two phenomena were linked, as filibusters wanted to seize Mexican soil in order to extend the border further south, providing a further buffer for slaveholding and making capital flight more difficult. Sam Houston himself “lost” two slaves and he was far from being alone. One filibuster complained acridly in the 1850s, “Something must be done for the protection of slave property in this state. Negroes are running off daily. During the past week, seven slaves left this portion of the country. Let the frontiers of slavery begin to recede and when or where the wave of recession may be arrested God only knows.” Getting Mexico “Americanized and Southernized” was therefore a fervently held objective for filibusters.²⁴

Little wonder. In San Antonio in 1855 one slave owner concluded glumly that Negroes “cannot be kept here without great risk to their running away.” At that time the country south of San Antonio was open, flat, and uninhabited, the Mexican border was not far away, and, of course, there were always Mexicans more than happy to aid enslaved Africans in escaping. Moreover, often these Africans took slave owners’ property with them when they escaped, compounding the loss. This led to the creation of a “vigilance committee and a police force to stop the practice.”²⁵

The latter had to contend not only with rebellious Negroes and their Mexican allies but also with Native Americans imbued with a firm sense of sovereignty. In the southwest, for example, “the Kiowas also quickly emerged as the deadliest of the southwestern Amerindians. In proportion to the numbers, they killed more Anglo-Americans on the Texas-Kansas frontier than the Comanches.” It is striking that the Indians were referred to as “red niggers,” a telling indication of the weight of slavery on the minds of English-speakers. Moreover, the leader of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, who served as Secretary of War from 1853–1857, was “decisive for the West in a way that few Americans notice. . . . It was his army and his policies, renewed in the 1870s after they were aborted in the Civil War, that carried out the final conquests of the western Amerindians.”²⁶ Though the “Buffalo Soldiers” were to become a major spearhead against Native Americans, before the Civil War their mutual opponents often linked the sad fates of Black and Red alike.

Though the Mexican government was notorious for its unfavorable treatment of Indians, they sought assiduously to attract the Seminoles of Florida who had warred against the United States for years. The Seminoles, who in a sense had merged with runaway enslaved Africans in Florida, “were attracted strongly by the idea of the Mexican colony.” They

established the Seminole maroon settlement in Coahuila, Mexico, which became an object of hatred for the slave owners of Texas after Mexico helped them fight off U.S. slave hunters in the 1850s.²⁷ Interestingly, the Seminoles had fled a “Hispanic”-dominated Florida for a “Hispanic”-dominated Mexico, for “once Florida became a territory of the United States the Indian, African and white worlds that had once coexisted and shared space were deliberately separated.”²⁸

In a foretaste of the intoxicating era of the Revolution, in the antebellum era Mexico never relinquished the notion of trying to “persuade the Indians” of the southwest to “turn against the young republic of Texas.”²⁹ But this kind of plotting worked both ways for there were those in the United States, particularly in the south, who lusted hungrily after Mexican territory even after the confiscatory war of the 1840s. The infamous “Knights of the Golden Circle,” for example, sought to seize territory in Mexico and elsewhere in the hemisphere as the basis for a great slave empire.³⁰ In aid of this scheme, fire-eating southerners clamored for the reopening of the African slave trade. Galveston, the hometown of Jack Johnson, was only a few hundred miles by ship from Havana; as late as the 1850s Africans were being smuggled into Texas from there. However, these illicit activities backfired as the “unassimilated Negroes” were rebellious, unreconciled to the deprivation of their liberty, and consequently more willing than U.S. Negroes of older vintage to escape to nearby Mexico.³¹

However, too much can be made of the antislavery impulse among the population of Mexican origin. In 1865, when the Confederate military was collapsing throughout the south, pro-Confederacy Rafael Armijo and Manuel Armijo, merchants with stores in Albuquerque, Mesilla, and other towns continued to profit by selling great quantities of merchandise to the secessionists. Indeed, they bought and sold enslaved Negroes as late as 15 April 1865, helping to bolster the nascent proslavery forces in New Mexico.³² During antebellum times New Mexico was influenced deeply by the slave state of Missouri, the other end of a major trade and transportation route, and by its immediate neighbor to the east, Texas, a state in good standing in the Confederacy. In 1857 an attempt was made to bar the entry of Negroes to this sparsely populated region.³³ Nevertheless, “most Tejanos,” or Texans of Mexican origin, “refused to support the Confederate cause.”³⁴

The secession itself upset the previous consensus. Of course Negroes remained hostile toward slavery but some Mexicans saw an advantage in

splitting their powerful northern neighbor or even manipulating Confederates as a pawn against Washington. Recall that this was at a time when France, which had not relinquished its dream of reviving its hemispheric empire, had seized power in Mexico, while the United States was enmeshed in the Civil War. It was not as if Washington, particularly in this conflict's early stages, was so fervently antislavery that it would have been an abomination to oppose the United States. How was Mexico supposed to respond when during the Civil War the United States "produced preliminary terms for black colonies in Mexico, British Honduras, Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica before the U.S. government's insistence upon the colonists' retaining U.S. citizenship caused a collapse of negotiations"? Sanctifying the presence of U.S. citizens in their midst—citizens who owed a debt of ersatz "freedom" to Washington—could have created a permanent force for destabilization.³⁵

U.S. Negroes were not predisposed to back the puppet regime in Mexico City, particularly in light of stories in the southern press in August 1865 asserting that Maximilian was amassing troops along the Rio Grande and contracting with foreign speculators for a large number of Negroes to be kept in slavery for ten years on the understanding that their temporary bondage might be renewed and they could be transferred for sale without being consulted.³⁶ Not surprisingly, Negroes sided with Maximilian's opponents, just as Confederates gathered on the other side of the barricades.

After the Civil War a number of Confederates, including the aforementioned Matthew Fontaine Maury,³⁷ fled ignominiously to Mexico where they hoped to establish a base against the United States and continue their traitorous rebellion by other means. But Negro soldiers and an enraged Mexican population put an end to these pipe dreams by ousting the French. But thousands of Confederates unwilling to reconcile themselves to U.S. rule continued to flee south after the Civil War; the fact that "most Confederates in Mexico had collaborated with Emperor Maximilian" made their continued stay unpleasant, particularly after his ouster.³⁸

Vengeful "former Confederates," seeking retribution for their perceived ill-treatment south of the border, "launched several raids into Mexico" after the Civil War, "sometimes wearing blackface or Indian disguises. One of the most notorious raids occurred in late 1872 when a band of 15 to 20 Texans crossed to the Rio Grande's west bank near Fort Clark and murdered a group of villagers at Resurreccion." This enraged Mexico and heightened tensions along the border, ironically and perhaps deliberately

from the Confederates' viewpoint, leading to "confrontations between Mexicans and African American soldiers." These "armed enforcers of American aggression now became a familiar sight" along the border.

Negroes found themselves in repeated confrontation not only with rebellious Native Americans. In 1877, for example, "Mexicans and Tejanos . . . began to riot, looting homes and villages with cries of 'kill all Americans and death to the gringos.'" In these circumstances, armed Negro soldiers became the thin blue line between a white supremacist order and a revolt against it. This paradox was far from comforting to the U.S. authorities, for "fears about a multiracial coalition of Blacks, Indians and Mexicans had accompanied the first Anglo settlers to Texas and remained a continuing source of anxiety through the post-Civil War years." Hanging like smog in the warm borderland air was the weighty question: "Could Blacks be trusted to fight other people of color?"³⁹

James Leiker, like others, has concluded that "during most of the nineteenth century, Blacks held Mexicans in higher esteem than they did other immigrant groups, a legacy of Mexico's historical opposition to slavery." This fed their desire to assist Mexico. "In the 1880s," for example, "Black Texans even had approached Mexico's government with plans to launch a colonization movement there and boost Mexico's cotton production."⁴⁰ No doubt they felt that giving their lives to Mexico made more sense than doing the same north of the border. Blacks were not allowed to fight to protect their own interests in the United States. "In 1883, Blacks in Harrison County attempted to organize their own militia and protect themselves from racial violence. Local [whites] with the help of state forces, crushed the movement, but rumors of armed, uniformed Blacks provoked paranoiac fears that lasted for months."⁴¹

Though Mexico and those fleeing white supremacy in the United States supported one another, their mutual response to the indigenous people was another matter altogether. Like the "Buffalo Soldiers," the "Seminole Maroons" who returned to the United States after the Civil War "played a major role in helping to clear West Texas of Indian bands hostile to white settlement of the area." They "killed, maimed, imprisoned and destroyed the villages and properties of diverse bands of Kickapoos, Apaches, Cheyennes, Kowas and Comanches. . . . They played a major role in furthering the policy that had brought them back to the United States by driving these bands onto reservations or deep into the Mexican frontier and facilitating white expansion into West Texas."⁴² The role of these celebrated "Seminole Negro Indian Scouts" was heightened by the reluc-

tance of the governments of Benito Juarez and others in Mexico City to crack down on “raiding” Indians who crossed the border freely into the United States.⁴³

This changed after Porfirio Diaz came to power. However, those who subdued Native Americans on behalf of a white supremacist government may have thought they were simply doing their duty as “citizens” (albeit third-class citizens), or that their welfare would improve by killing Indians. In reality they only undermined their long-term interests by weakening the opposition to a white supremacist government in Washington.

The Negro soldiers—or “Seminole” soldiers, which was functionally the same thing—might have noticed that just as they were aiding in the “winning of the west,” crushing Native American resistance and preventing those of Mexican origin from fighting back, Negroes continued to endure difficulties in the land they were busy securing. In San Diego County, for example, the immediate neighbor of Baja California, Mexico, “it was not until well after the Civil War that whites gave up their attempts to keep blacks from entering the state. Before 1870 a black could not testify against a white in a court of law, vote in public elections, intermarry with whites, or farm on certain lands.” Even though there were only about fifty-five Negroes in San Diego County in 1880, equality was far from being a reality.⁴⁴

After the death of Reconstruction some African Americans organized to migrate en masse to Mexico. There were also countless individual migrations, as evidenced by the father of Langston Hughes, the writer. Shortly after he was born, his parents separated because his father wanted to escape the United States and go “where a colored man could get ahead and make money quicker, and my mother did not want to go. My father went to Cuba, and then to Mexico, where there wasn’t any color line, or any Jim Crow.”⁴⁵ That Langston Hughes’s father was not alone in wanting to go to Mexico is indicated by the experience of the Alabama Negro colony in Mexico in the 1890s. Fleeing pell mell from Jim Crow, lynchings, and the rest, Negroes were leaving for Liberia, Central America, and elsewhere. There were “ten large colonies” in Mexico. A Mexican official had assured the migrants that his nation “will be their Canaan, the land of hope and promise, where they would find relief from the persecution of southern whites.” He wanted them to grow cotton, a process with which they were quite familiar. Hundreds left Alabama and were “warmly supported by the Mexican government.”⁴⁶ It was “one of the greatest colonization experiments in Alabama history.”⁴⁷ As it turned out,

this migration project was unsuccessful and many Negroes returned to the United States; however, the dream of escaping tyranny persisted.⁴⁸

Surely this vision animated the imagination of William Ellis. Born in 1864 on a small farm near Victoria, Texas, as the Civil War was winding to a halt, by the 1890s this “mulatto” was an “entrepreneur who often claimed Cuban and Mexican origins,” a common trait among Negroes seeking to escape the ravages of Negrophobia. Early in his career he worked as an agent for a leather and hide merchant in San Antonio, who sent him to Mexico. By 1896 he became the “first Negro broker” on Wall Street, then became the “Duke of Harrar, an Ethiopian province” which led to “two million acres of land” being “bestowed upon him.” He “seems to have continued working as a broker in New York, with a branch office in Mexico City,” where he died “while on a business trip.”⁴⁹

One of Ellis’s many ventures involved establishing a Negro colony in Mexico that would raise coffee and cotton. Despite his attraction to Ethiopia, he “pointed out that Mexico was not only closer but more civilized than Africa.” This was apparently not an isolated view. When the Negro emigrationist Henry Turner proposed migration as a “solution for race problems . . . shouts of ‘Africa!’ were met with shouts of ‘Mexico!’”⁵⁰

Ellis made a persuasive case for emigration. “[As long] as the Negro is suppressed as he is in the United States,” he thundered, “the better class of them will seek new fields, and Mexico, standing at the very doors of the United States, offering inducements to all, will prove a welcome home to the Negro.” When he visited Mexico City in 1888 the leadership there agreed to the idea of a massive Negro colony of twenty thousand. Six years later he agreed to bring five thousand. The press in the southern United States was rife with rumors that hundreds of thousands of Negroes would follow Ellis as if he were some sort of Pied Piper. Ellis and his followers were encouraged by the fact that in 1857 Luis N. Fouche, a Negro from Florida, had established a colony named “Eureka” near Tampico, and the same year forty other Negroes settled near Veracruz. This was in contrast to Bishop Turner, who only managed to bring a thousand Negroes to Africa after two decades of struggle. Yet Ellis’s project also proved to be unsuccessful.⁵¹

This may have had something to do with Ellis himself. His experience convinced him that “Negroes are worthless as pioneers” and denied “emphatically all stories of cruelty or shooting and says that the company has simply charged up [to] one hundred thousand dollars the experiment cost them to profit and loss . . . this incident has created a very bitter feeling

throughout Mexico against the American Negro.” One Negro, Anthony Jones, said that “on reaching the hacienda the Negroes found themselves in the worst form of bondage; they were cruelly and inhumanely treated; the food was not fit to eat. No letter to friends in the States was allowed to go out in the mails.” There were even “raging” cases of “smallpox.” This account was disputed by an official investigation that found that “the houses” in Mexico were better as a whole than those used by Mexican farm laborers. The food was the same. The pay under the contract was “better than that given to Mexicans.”⁵²

Nevertheless, African Americans were understandably entranced by Ellis’s message. Writing from Mexico City in 1889, he reported that he had “just received my concessions from the Mexican government for the introduction of (20,000) twenty thousand Afro-American colonists from the southern United States of America into the states of Veracruz, Tamaulipas and San Luis Potosi, in which states have over three million acres of rich lands and from the Mexican government I receive for every person over (12) twelve years of age (\$50) fifty dollars in government bonds bearing (6%) six percent interest. I have 2000 (two thousand) families ready to start within the next (60) days. I will furnish all the colonists for the first two years with all necessary farming tools, implements, wagons, also clothing and provisions of every kind.” Not surprisingly, many Negroes starving in the wilds of Jim Crow leapt at the opportunity.⁵³

However, for those who were poverty-stricken in the first place it was difficult to find the wherewithal to move abroad. This proved to be an almost insuperable obstacle for en masse emigration. Those who had managed to accumulate a modicum of capital, such as the father of Langston Hughes, fared much better, either as migrants or entrepreneurs. Consider Junius G. Groves of Edwardsville, Kansas, for example. He shipped potatoes and other farm products to nearly every portion of the United States, “and to Mexico.” He “never found his color to be a hindrance to him in business” there.⁵⁴ Thomas Bass, a Negro rancher living in Mexico, would have agreed. His horses had won “blue ribbons” at state fairs in Iowa and Minnesota and he did even more south of the border. As a result, it was hard to suppress the desire to emigrate. In 1893, James Fowler established the “Colored Colonization Company of San Diego” and it was not long before it declared, “the Mexican emigration fever is rife here.”⁵⁵

Of course, Negroes were not the only ones who thought of repairing to Mexico. In 1894 Jim Crow advocates proposed to the authorities in Mexico that a section of their territory be utilized for a Negro colony

established by segregationists. Not surprisingly, this proposition was viewed more negatively than similar ideas emanating from Negroes themselves, since the Mexicans feared that their purposes were malign and, like similar proposals during the Civil War, were little more than a Trojan horse.⁵⁶

Mexico was not the only country in Central America viewed as a refuge by besieged Negroes. Beginning in the 1880s, as Reconstruction ceased, between seventy and eighty Negroes arrived weekly in Puerto Barrios in Guatemala from New Orleans particularly. They were part of a contingent of railroad workers who were pivotal in this industry throughout the entire region, including Mexico. These "Afro-North Americans . . . catalyzed the Guatemalan railroad labor movement and established a precedent for other Guatemalan labor movements." They "organized the earliest challenge to the state and multinational corporations." By the early 1900s, they "composed the largest segment of the railroad and banana industries' workforce." There were few women. Many were artisans. They were enthusiastic advocates of the revolutionary ferment of 1897. On the other hand, they had a tendency to side with Euro-American contractors in the latter's conflicts with the Guatemalan government. Perhaps this was why the U.S. Consul there defended them, as "an affront to any U.S. citizen was considered an affront to the entire nation." Nevertheless, these Negroes "staged the first public protest against the state and foreign capital in Guatemala" and were blunt "agents of defiance" with "reputations as revolutionaries and strike instigators." But with the advent of the Mexican Revolution, antforeigner—particularly anti-U.S.—sentiment spread like wildfire in Central America and the presence of Negroes was compromised, becoming virtually untenable. However, their presence smoothed the path for the flamboyant Jack Johnson's arrival in Mexico City.⁵⁷

CHAPTER 2

A Tale of Two Negroes

Jack Johnson was alienated. Criminal charges filed against him because of his consensual relationship with a Euro-American woman had forced him into exile. White supremacists were infuriated with him since his victories in the ring over various “white” challengers—and the presumed arrogance with which he had dispatched them—had, in their mind, provided a vicious blow to the solar plexus of “racial” superiority itself. Films of these matches were banned routinely and some in Washington, and the region ranging from Austin to Richmond particularly, wanted to make him pay.

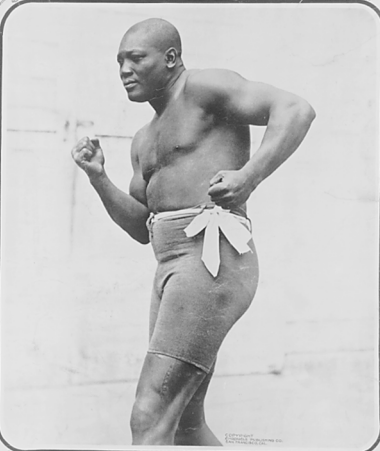
Of course, there were consolations for Johnson. Through a lengthy exile that had included stops in Britain and Russia, he had maintained a distinct fondness for the Spanish-speaking world, embracing the ambience of Barcelona and Havana before settling down in Mexico City. The revolutionary atmosphere of Mexico worked on him like a tonic. Trundling about the broad boulevards of the capital in a late-model automobile, he was as much of a fixture in the city as the Spanish colonial architecture that gave the capital its distinctiveness.

He may have been gone from the United States but he was far from forgotten. The memories of his riveting boxing matches with outgunned “white” opponents were ever present. When James J. Jeffries lost to

COMPLIMENTS OF THE

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

CONTESTANTS FOR THE WORLD'S CHAMPIONSHIP, JULY 4, 1910

JAMES J. JEFFRIES

AGE	33	WEIGHT	215 LBS.	REACH	75 IN.
HEIGHT	5 FT. 10 IN.	WINDMILL	100	DISCIPLE	10 IN.
WINDMILL	100	DISCIPLE	10 IN.	WINDMILL	100
DISCIPLE	10 IN.	WINDMILL	100	DISCIPLE	10 IN.
WINDMILL	100	DISCIPLE	10 IN.	WINDMILL	100
DISCIPLE	10 IN.	WINDMILL	100	DISCIPLE	10 IN.

JACK JOHNSON

AGE	33	WEIGHT	215 LBS.	REACH	75 IN.
HEIGHT	5 FT. 10 IN.	WINDMILL	100	DISCIPLE	10 IN.
WINDMILL	100	DISCIPLE	10 IN.	WINDMILL	100
DISCIPLE	10 IN.	WINDMILL	100	DISCIPLE	10 IN.
WINDMILL	100	DISCIPLE	10 IN.	WINDMILL	100
DISCIPLE	10 IN.	WINDMILL	100	DISCIPLE	10 IN.

CHRONICLE HAS THE BEST SPORTING PAGES ON THE PACIFIC COAST

The heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson was a potent symbol against white supremacy, particularly when he pummeled his “white” opponents into submission. Compelled to leave the United States because of hostile reaction to his relationship with a Euro-American woman, he wound up in revolutionary Mexico where he attempted to persuade other disgruntled African Americans to migrate south of the border. Courtesy Library of Congress.

Johnson, “there were several racial disturbances in Texas as a result of this fight. . . . Governor T. M. Campbell asked the legislature to bar any films of the fight, and it did so. Other legislators tried unsuccessfully to get a law passed which would bar for all time films in which Negroes were participants.”¹

As early as 1912 U.S. Attorney General George Wickersham was informed that “special interest [had been] manifested by the President [himself] in the investigation of charges against John A. Johnson, heavyweight pugilist.”² William Howard Taft was not generally viewed as a friend of the Negro and, in any case, was being pressured to rein in Johnson who had upset the dictates of white supremacy not only with his mating patterns but his affluent lifestyle as well. Mita Jorgensen of Beaver Dam, Wisconsin

sin, addressed the president by saying, “in the name of God[,] also in the name of my country’s flag . . . I want to say. . . I cannot see why this bad man Jack Johnson who, as it stated in the Chicago papers some time ago can have any white girl in Chicago, well”—she added incongruously and without apparent irony—“that means me too.” Johnson, she sputtered, was no more than a “snake in the grass.”³

After Johnson’s predictable conviction, the authorities were quick to ascertain “whether his action violates condition of bond.”⁴ They suspected that Johnson might flee but were confident that the “French authorities might refuse to permit [Johnson] to land for the same reasons that our immigration authorities would refuse to admit a foreigner in similar circumstances to this country.”⁵ Meanwhile, many Negroes were rowing in the opposite direction. George W. Harris, editor of the *New York Amsterdam News*, which sought to appeal to the mushrooming Negro population of Harlem, conceded that the “colored people of New York condemn the folly of ‘Jack’ Johnson.” But “they ask you to stop his persecution by federal authorities at Chicago because of his race.”⁶

Despite their best efforts, Johnson was able to slip from the grasp of the authorities in Washington, although they did not give up. By early 1915 the “American Consul at Cienfuegos, Cuba . . . reported by telegraph that [Johnson]” was en route.⁷ But at the urging of Washington, “an official of the Cuban Legation” reported that “the Cuban government will be glad to deport this defendant as an undesirable alien.”⁸ For some reason, however, the Cuban authorities had difficulty deporting him. Perhaps it was because the magnetic Johnson was popular in Cuba, just as he was popular in Black America. He was taking on bouts and earning cash; the U.S. Consul General in Havana reported that “we have kept comparatively close watch upon Mr. Johnson and have ascertained that apparently he has no present intention of leaving Habana [*sic*]. He is said to have taken a home [here].”⁹

But if Washington’s counterparts in Havana had their way, Johnson would soon be ousted from the “Pearl of the Antilles.” Captain Cushman A. Rice of Havana, newly installed as President of the Sporting Club of Cuba, declared that if he had a choice Johnson would not fight there. “Let me say for myself, as well as every man of means on the island that a bout between [Johnson and the challenger Jess Willard] will not be tolerated for a single moment.” Why? “The race question is too delicate a subject to ever allow a white man to battle with a Negro. Our interests are too valuable to allow the flames of race feeling to be fanned into a riot. . . . Never

will we tolerate mixed bouts. . . . We don't want any civil war and that's what it would mean if a black started to muss up a white man. It can't be done with safety. . . . You know they [Negro Cubans] went off into the woods to run a government of their own about three years ago and we had to go out and shoot them. We don't want that. We don't intend to do anything that would put the idea in their heads again."¹⁰ The island was still reeling from what was widely viewed as a "race war" a few years earlier. Were Johnson to pound on the skull of some white man it would surely disrupt "racial" harmony, thought some Cubans.

Being alienated from his homeland, Johnson thought that Negroes should leave the United States for "France, glorious France" or "Latin America, the garden of the world" that "offers us all the golden privileges of a land that has never known racial prejudice." Mexico was "willing not only to give us the privileges of Mexican citizenship, but will champion our cause." Although darker Mexicans and Latin Americans may have disagreed with his overly optimistic analysis of "race" relations in the region, lynching and other excesses, which were routine in the United States, were less prevalent in the hemisphere as a whole. That was not all. "If you want us, Mexico," Johnson exclaimed, "we are ready to become your citizens and willing to do all that we can to make you a great power among the nations. If you want us, Latin America, we are ready to dwell among you and make you rich as we have made the southern white man rich." With a final flourish and in ironic and ringing words he added, "in other words, the Negro is on the auction block, and the nation or community that bids the highest will receive him."¹¹

It was inevitable that after being deprived of citizenship rights, maltreated, lynched, and burned at the stake, some Negroes might conclude that they would be better served by allying themselves with foreign powers, even revolutionary powers like Mexico who were at odds with Washington. That Jack Johnson, one of the most celebrated and affluent Negroes of his time, would so boldly and audaciously articulate Negro militance was indicative of the dilemma faced by Washington. For if the comfortably well-off Johnson thought this way, what of those less fortunate?

Washington was in no mood, however, to reflect on the "racial" tides of history and how its own policies might have influenced Johnson's views. Its ally in London, straining to maintain an empire comprised overwhelmingly of the "colored," was similarly unwilling to listen to Johnson's plea. When he was in the United Kingdom in 1916, Whitehall "made clear to

the Negro prizefighter that if he does not leave voluntarily he probably will be deported." Apparently "innumerable complaints [were] received by the authorities with regard to his obnoxious attention to white women."¹² The "white slave department of Scotland Yard" (tellingly) was charged with monitoring him and was said to have "received certain complaints with reference to Johnson's conduct."¹³

While Washington became embroiled in ever sharper conflicts with Mexico and newer "threats" such as the Soviet Union, Johnson continued to be defiant. One who knew the boxer reported, "I have become a friend of Jack Johnson, and can positively assert that he has sent money and written articles to aid the Negroes in their struggle in the United States. He makes collections among the Negroes and their sympathizers. . . . He tried to go to the Antilles, especially Cuba, to foment a rebellion among the Negroes." Although he was not a "Socialist," he "calls himself simply, DEFENDER OF HIS RACE"¹⁴ (emphasis in original).

Johnson was not a difficult man to keep under surveillance. He stood out in a crowd, particularly when traveling in Europe. Over six feet tall and a hefty 226 pounds, the muscular pugilist looked as if he had been expertly sculpted out of a block of ebony. He smoked but did not drink, and carted around large amounts of cash that he spent liberally—this alone made him conspicuous at a time when most blacks were poor. When he was finally jailed in Leavenworth penitentiary in 1920, the wallet of the forty-two-year-old Johnson contained "\$4,331.26"—more than most people in the United States earned in a single year.¹⁵

Johnson's wealth allowed him to get his antiracist machine rolling. This was the judgment of the U.S. Military Attaché in Madrid, where Johnson had made a stop before decamping for Mexico. He was a "traitor to his country, judged by his own words," said the attaché indignantly, without pondering whether the United States had acted as a traitor to Johnson and his people. "Two rich Mexicans at present in Madrid and who are soon going to the United States have entered into agreement with [Johnson] to send him and his wife to Mexico where a fight will be arranged between him and some American. George Velcia and Gus Rhodes of Johnson's suite have already asked for their passports. Johnson claiming he will get there without a passport." An unnamed source was cited as declaring that on "one night in Johnson's house," Johnson proclaimed, "I was for Germany before and am for her yet and always will be." Supposedly, he claimed to have intelligence about German submarines off the coast of Spain and was asked pointedly, "Johnson, you being in exile from the

United States with various indictments hanging over you, why didn't you use this information to make yourself good with the United States and get these indictments lifted so you could have returned to the United States with honor?" Johnson is said to have replied, "Oh, to hell with them, I would not believe any promise they would have made me." On the other hand, he was duly impressed with the U.S.'s adversaries. "The Germans treat me as a man and my wife as a lady."¹⁶

The U.S. authorities were unmoved. They characterized Johnson as an unrepentant "traitor." It was "rumored that two rich Mexicans at present in Madrid" were planning to send him to Mexico, now in the throes of revolutionary transformation, "for a fight." One informant, who was said to have penetrated Johnson's inner circle and had spent "a week in company of the Johnson family . . . and their set," concluded in disgust that Johnson was "surrounded by a set of cheap admirers and parasites. . . . They are all hand-in-glove with the German element."¹⁷

Thus, as the United States entered World War I in 1918, months after the Bolshevik Revolution and as Mexican unrest continued, the authorities were inclined to take Johnson's challenge quite seriously. When he wrote from the Palace Hotel in Madrid to Arturo Craven in Mexico City, U.S. spies were quick to monitor his every word, as he was on a special "list." "Writer confirms his [cable] to addressee as follows, 'send me five thousand pesetas in advance and also transportation first class for three persons.'" The "addressee wishes writer to go to Mexico so that several bouts can be arranged there, and writer [Johnson] seems very anxious to go."¹⁸

It is striking that Johnson remained so upbeat about Mexico, for certainly his relationship with this nation was not free of tension. No doubt, this was evidence of his even more conflicted ties with his homeland. Later he recalled a "proposed fight" in the border town of Juarez, that was said to be "financed by Pancho Villa, the bandit leader." The then leader of Mexico, Carranza "declared that if [Johnson] attempted to land at Veracruz he would make me a prisoner and turn me over to the United States." That was one reason he wound up fighting Jess Willard in Havana, overriding similarly stern local objection. In an oblique reference to the rumor that Washington would smile more kindly upon Johnson if he were to lose to Willard, the latest in a long line of "great white hopes," Johnson observed, "Those who chafed under the disappointment of having a man of my race hold the championship, I was told, would be mollified" if he lost the fight—which he promptly did. But when Washington's antagonism toward him did not diminish, Johnson's anger probably grew.¹⁹

Johnson arrived in Mexico in 1919, a fateful year of “race riots” in the United States and Bolshevik consolidation in Russia. The United States had accused Mexico of collaborating with its most recent antagonist, Germany, during World War I. Mexico City had become a “headquarters for a swarm of international drunks, spies, broken-down newspapermen, fences for stolen jewelry and paintings, and propagandists for all brands of politics.”²⁰

The *Chicago Defender*, which appealed to a growing Negro population in this midwestern metropolis, did not share this opinion. There it was reported that Johnson had arrived in Mexico City “several days ago from Cuba and has become the idol of the citizens of this great city and the leading people, high military dignitaries and big political leaders are his constant companions. He was brought here by a syndicate of Mexicans under a contract for a year to stage bull matches in the bull ring which has a seating capacity of 40,000. . . . His wife is with him and they are living in a home of the sort that one might find in the 1000 block on Lake Shore Drive,” a particularly posh section of Chicago. In contrast to the bad publicity his marriage had received in the United States, in Mexico “already Mrs. Johnson’s social secretary has been kept busy answering invitations for the Johnsons to accept dinner parties and theatrical engagements.”²¹

The Johnsons were not just social butterflies. Johnson quickly formed a “land co.” and proclaimed, “Brazil may have its opportunities, but there are far better ones in this city,” referring to Mexico City. “I believe this to be the best place in the world for our people. . . . The expense of coming here, especially from the southern states, is considerably less than going to South American countries.”²²

Johnson rapidly became a fixture in the landscape of Mexico City. Soon plans were revealed for him to become a “movie star,” assuming “the role of Pedro Cronolio, a Mexican adventurer. A beautiful love story features [in] the plot; old days on the Mexican border, lust for gold and the sudden rise to the highest position of human attainment in the Mexican government.”²³ Johnson’s antagonists too had taken to the silver screen to counter his magnetic appeal. At least two movies had been made about him, both revealing their hatred of him.²⁴ African Americans, under cinematic assault from *Birth of a Nation* and similarly odious films, could only shake their heads in amazement.

As for Johnson, he did not shrink from associating with other U.S. radicals in exile. As he was arriving in Mexico, so were other North American

dissidents. The lengthening list included the nascent communist, Mike Gold, who had crossed the border, like so many others, to escape the draft. "At one point collecting money in the streets of Mexico City for a Spanish translation of the Soviet Constitution, he encountered the African American boxer Jack Johnson, with whom he was acquainted." After they had exchanged small talk, the benevolent Johnson bestowed a \$10 contribution upon him for this radical cause.²⁵

There was a de facto alliance between Johnson and the budding communists in his midst. They publicized his dissidence. As the exile, Charles Shipman recalled, "The stolid black giant was a popular hero in Mexico. When he fought an Argentinian [*sic*] in the Mexico City bullring, Mike [Gold] and I were there. In fact we went there with him on the running-board of his car." "On the way home from the fight Mike prodded him, 'Say Jack, you got something against the Bolsheviki?'"²⁶ This Johnson denied. Such incidents confirmed many people north of the border in their opinion that Johnson had gone over completely to the cause of radicalism and was bent on using Mexico as a beachhead of subversion against his native land.

Johnson "took the lead in a hard-drinking circle of military men and Cientificos or mining millionaires, who lived in baroque mansions and breakfasted every day promptly at seven. . . . The railway magnate Paulino Fontes was a member of this set and he took Johnson out to call on President Carranza in the palace at Chapultapec." That Johnson's ardent rhetoric could be backed up by muscular action was the worry of Washington. One State Department official nervously asserted that "Jack Johnson, of pugilistic fame, has been spreading social equality propaganda among the Negroes in Mexico and has been endeavouring [*sic*] to incite colored element in this country." That he was now a "friend" of Carranza, who no longer worried about Johnson's past ties to Pancho Villa and his assault on the central government in light of the latter's strength, meant that Johnson could hardly be ignored.²⁷

Had Johnson been a solitary Negro fighting the depredations of Jim Crow by himself, the threat he posed would have been minor. But as a writer to the NAACP journal put it in 1913, corresponding from Torreon in Mexico's interior, "The Jews and the Irish and many, many others had to leave home to solve their economic and race questions" and "[here] a real man can be a real man. There is, as you know, no prejudice [here]." Move to Mexico, he urged. His only complaint related to Euro-Americans who when "they come here use every opportunity to give us a black

eye.”²⁸ Obviously, they would have to be dealt with at the appropriate moment.

The Bureau of Investigation was fully apprised of this migration and the impassioned rhetoric it inspired. An October 1919 report stated that “many Negroes are going into Mexico. Twenty were counted at the theatre in Mexico City one night. They are publicly in favor of riots in the United States and are conferring with many Carrancista generals . . . with a view, supposedly, of assisting the Carrancistas in case of trouble with the United States.” Johnson “gave a boxing exhibition in Nuevo Laredo,” along the border, “a short time ago and something like 20 Negroes from the United States . . . conferred” privately with him. “It is suspicioned [*sic*] by well posted Americans that this meeting was had in Nuevo Laredo for the purpose of giving Johnson a chance to have an understanding with his visitors and to further Carranza propaganda in the United States. At this time, there are three Negro musicians and a small well educated yellow Negro in Nuevo Laredo and several Americans have informed me that they have seen him in close consultation with the Carrancistas there. It is rumored that Johnson has a commission under the Carranza government.” What was to be done in response? The Bureau deemed “advisable to have an investigation in Mexico City of Jack Johnson’s activities in order to determine to what extent he is endeavoring to incite the Negroes of this country.” Closer investigation of the Negro musicians who were flocking to the border in search of greater opportunity was also advised. Among these were Louis Markham and Jerry Smith of San Antonio, and James Kelley of New Iberia, Louisiana. The first two may have been influenced by the “moving pictures” that “have been exhibited in San Antonio recently showing Jack Johnson in dress suit and stating he is a member of the best clubs in Mexico City.”²⁹

Johnson later confessed that in Mexico, “I made many friends among whom was Carranza,” who “made every effort to make my stay in the Mexican Republic a pleasant and comfortable one.” Washington knew that Carranza was not above deploying coercive diplomacy against the United States and the U.S. embassy in Mexico City could not have been happy with Johnson’s admission that “frequently” he and Carranza “met each other in private.” Their mutual grievances against Washington would no doubt have been a topic of conversation.³⁰

The busy leader showed his affection and concern for the famed fighter by “going as far to provide me with escorts of soldiers when I had occasion to travel in sections of the country infested by bandits or

revolutionists." Carranza, he said admiringly, was a "man of broad views. . . . He was greatly interested in world politics and in the future relations between his country and the United States." Unlike many exiles, Johnson did not limit himself to the modern and comfortable capital city but traveled around the nation frequently. True to his word, he did take "part in some of the bull-fighting exhibitions which were being frequently held in Mexico City and vicinity." He "had been urged by the governor of Lower California to visit that section"—and he promptly did. "It was necessary for us to travel in a round about way, our course traveling through Guadalajara and Sonora, two Mexican states in which bandits, as well as Indian tribes, were indulging in depredations. . . . [On trains] passengers were robbed and many were slain." Johnson himself was stopped by a "horde of savage [*sic*] Yaqui Indians" in Sonora. "I began talking to them, having gained sufficient knowledge of the Mexican vernacular. . . . When I told them who I was, they were sufficiently interested to halt their looting." Eventually, Johnson became so fond of the Mexican hinterlands that he "opened a café" in "Tia Juana."³¹

There were tens of thousands of U.S. citizens in Mexico, though few of them seemed to be as close to the leadership as Johnson. Most had the kind of Jim Crow attitudes that had driven Johnson into exile in the first place. So what would happen when white supremacy of the old sort confronted those no longer willing to submit to its dictates? An incident involving Johnson hinted at an answer. He and a group of friends went to eat at Sanborn's original drugstore and restaurant in Mexico City, now a chain and still in business today. Walter Sanborn, the U.S. owner, "drew the color line and refused to serve Johnson. [Johnson] left but returned a few hours later with three or four of Carranza's generals. They drew their pistols and demanded that Sanborn apologize. Mexico, they informed him was not 'white man's country.' Sanborn was forced to shake hands, embrace and finally serve Johnson."³² The *Chicago Defender* reported this story with immense joy. Sanborn "has had his license revoked by the city authorities" after telling Johnson and his entourage that "he did not serve 'colored people.'" Johnson, the *Defender* said proudly, is "regarded as an important factor both in the business and political life here. He is the promoter of one of the largest land corporations in Mexico. Through this concern hundreds of men from the southern states are settling here."³³

Earlier it had been reported that D. H. Moore of the Chamber of Commerce in Jim Crow New Orleans entered a Mexico City restaurant, looked around, and said with disgust, "No [expletive deleted] could eat

with white people. . . . Jack overheard the remarks and without further preliminary landed an uppercut on his chin. No arrests were made, as the champion was in a country where the color of a man's skin is no bar to him receiving justice. . . . In Mexico no man can insult another on account of his race, creed or color and get away with it."³⁴ To many Negroes Johnson was an unapologetic "racial" avenger, correcting insulting slights that had to be silently tolerated on pain of being lynched north of the border.

On the other hand, those who supported white supremacist values were outraged by Johnson's behavior. The conservative oilman William F. Buckley, Sr., took note of the words of a U.S. Senate aide who declared that "Walter Sanborn of Mexico City was very badly treated by General Merigo and General de la Torre and forced him to wait on Jack Johnson." This confirmed for him the fact that "Johnson stands very high with the Carranza government and [there] are more Negroes now in Mexico City than ever before. Americans from there are of the opinion that the Carranza government are carrying out through Johnson quite a propaganda in the United States. Some time ago Johnson gave an exhibition in Nuevo Laredo and had about twenty Negroes from different portions of the United States to meet him there."³⁵ Nervously, Buckley contemplated the possibility that Johnson was forming a revolutionary base in the borderlands for anti-Washington activities.

With his ambitious land company and his image as a tough lone opponent of white supremacy, Johnson's popularity was soaring among Negroes—just as he was being vilified by antagonists. A spy who had infiltrated the Socialist Party in Mexico told his paymasters in Washington that "Johnson wished to spread race propaganda and he was interested in socialist ideology." In a speech "given before a cheering crowd in front of the Vega Hotel in Nuevo Laredo, Johnson said that when and if the gringos invaded Mexico, American blacks would stand alongside their Mexican brothers."³⁶ In Nuevo Laredo, cheek by jowl with Texas, the feisty fighter was "accompanied by General Juan Perez and Manuel Mijares, who are supporting him with funds, as he entertains them by exhibition bouts, punching the bag, and above all telling them how much better they are off than the [expletive deleted] American Gringos, and that the colored race are going to show them that when, or if the time ever comes when the Americans will attempt to come over there, the black man is your friend, and are with you, and will stand by you." Hoots of delight reportedly greeted this assertion and as he departed for a nearby saloon "where he is a drawing card," he was "followed there by [a] crowd in

cheers." Johnson was slated to fight one "Porky Flynn" there but after the latter "objected" to fighting a Negro—or objected to the idea of being pulverized by one—the bout was canceled.³⁷

The United States worried that Johnson would spread his insurgent message into places that theretofore had been silenced by Jim Crow. It was particularly worried about Johnson's visit to Panama, site of the strategically sensitive canal. A. L. Flint reported with evident anxiety in a "confidential" missive that Johnson "may come to the Isthmus in the near future from Mexico."³⁸

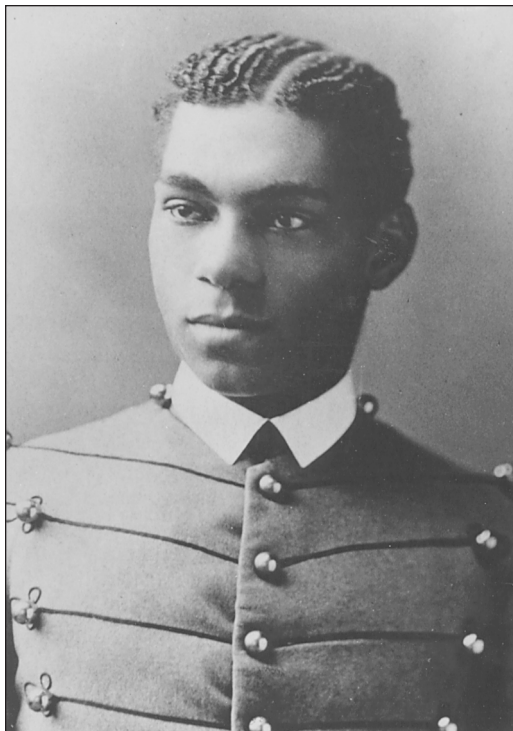
Similar concerns arose closer to home. "Over the entire south," stated one intelligence report, "particularly Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas there are spread secret societies of Negroes for the purpose of aggressive action against the whites," "perhaps 1500" in Houston alone. "The returned Negro soldiers" inspired by Johnson "are fostering this society and arms in great numbers are being procured. . . . In the recent riot at Longview [Texas] . . . everyone was greatly surprised to see Negroes coming out of the cane brakes with 30-30 caliber rifles and as much as 200 rounds of ammunition. . . . In the county in which Longview is situated, approximately 8000 firearms were taken. . . . The Houston riot of a few years ago," when Negro soldiers fatally wounded a number of whites, "was one of the first results of this Negro society." Subduing the Negroes would not be easy, as "much difficulty will be encountered in obtaining Negro informants, as in the present situation none could be trusted." It was no coincidence that this ferment was erupting in the regions closest to Mexico. "Efforts are thought to be under way by the Carrancista government to get Negroes into Mexico in order that they may assist the army, many of them having already been trained in our own service."³⁹ In fact, thought U.S. intelligence, Johnson himself was not only "publicly in favor of race riots in [the] U.S.," but was also one of the key "promoters of the Carranza propaganda in the U.S.," propaganda that included "efforts under way to get Negroes into the Mexican army."⁴⁰

Johnson had become a fixture in Nuevo Laredo, his presence across the border from Texas presenting a continuing challenge to Washington; there he was accompanied by "Gen. Juan Perez and Manuel Mijae who are supporting him with funds." He was also "fermenting racial feeling with blacks & Mexicans against whites."⁴¹ This campaign could simultaneously strip the United States of one of its prime fighting forces—Negro troopers—and augment those of Mexico.

The U.S. authorities were outraged at Johnson's behavior. He had committed two major transgressions for a black man—consorting with Euro-American women and allying with foreign powers. He was a “notorious cur,” said an indignant citizen who was pressing the U.S. government to restrain Johnson. What about the “indictment . . . for white slavery under the Mann Act in the case of one Lucille Cameron. . . . Is it not possible to get him back into the States and give him the dose he so justly merits?”⁴² This citizen, C. E. Ray of New Bern, North Carolina, need not have worried. The U.S. government was pressing every diplomatic lever possible to bring about his return to the United States so he could be jailed and a lesson sent to any Negro who might dream of using Mexico for revolutionary activities. Moreover, in their minds, Johnson presented a unique threat to “white” women—whom he wooed—and “white” men, whom he pounded into submission. Such effrontery needed to be punished and punished severely, lest emulation of Johnson by other Negroes become widespread. Wilbur Crafts, Secretary and Treasurer of the International Reform Bureau in Washington, D.C., pleaded to his government to “allow no leniency in this scandalous case of white slavery. . . . [Johnson] should get the full penalty of the law, if only to keep him from brutalizing our boys by increasing the morbid interest in prize fighting.”⁴³

The balance of forces was not in favor of Johnson or the government in Mexico that had been his champion. As World War I ended and Soviet intervention began to wind down, Washington had more time and energy to devote to the problems on the border. Johnson's presence in Mexico increasingly became untenable. The Mexican government had to ask if providing refuge for Johnson was worth the risk of U.S. reprisal. When Venustiano Carranza, the man who had become Johnson's friend and protector, was assassinated in the late spring of 1920, the former boxing champion knew this chapter in his life was coming to a close. Finally, on 19 September 1920 Johnson entered Leavenworth prison in Kansas, two months after surrendering in southern California. He was to serve a sentence of one year and one day “for the charge of White Slavery.”⁴⁴

Although Johnson was viewed in the corridors of power as a traitorous scoundrel, after his release from prison and arrival in Harlem in 1921, he received an ecstatic and thunderous reception. “Thousands” welcomed him. “There wasn't a vacant window [on] West 131st Street between Lenox and Fifth Avenue.” There was a “spirit of holiday” in the streets. “Crowds mobbed” his “car and tried to carry him on their shoulders.”⁴⁵



Henry O. Flipper, one of the first African Americans to attend West Point, faced severe persecution throughout his military career. Nevertheless, this fluent Spanish speaker was a key researcher in the cases that led to the massive dispossession of Mexican Americans in the U.S. Southwest roughly a century ago. Courtesy National Park Service, Fort Davis National Historic Site, Texas.

The roar of the subways and the hum of busy traffic could not drown out the enthusiastic crowds greeting the former heavyweight champion. While Harlem appeared to endorse putative sedition in Mexico in the face of boundless oppression, the U.S. government had to wonder whether the price to be paid for persecution—jeopardizing national security—was worth it.

Henry O. Flipper graduated from West Point in 1877, at a time when Reconstruction was being strangled and the prospects for Negroes generally appeared grim. He was the first Negro to receive a diploma from West

Point. While there he endured a primitive hazing along the Hudson River bluffs which hardly stopped even as he was establishing himself as a skilled “Indian fighter.” However, by 1882 he was dismissed from the military, ostensibly because of embezzlement. He said that, like Johnson, he was being punished for an indiscretion with a “white” woman. “I was railroaded out of the army,” was his blunt assessment, though he denied being “whipped and stripped” or “tried by hazers.” Nor—contrary to widespread belief among Negroes willing to think the worst—was he ever “mutilated in the slightest degree by white cadets at West Point” or “sentenced in a hazing court-martial to have [my] tongue cut out and . . . ears chopped off.” He reassured Negroes who thought otherwise that, yes, he had “two perfect ears” still.⁴⁶

Yet, unlike Johnson, he did not turn against the United States and support Mexico. To the contrary, from 1882 to 1891 he “surveyed public lands in Mexico for American companies under concessions from the Mexican government.” These companies were to become major targets for violence during the Revolution. From 1901 to 1905 he was “resident engineer” for the “Balvanera Mining Company, a New York corporation” which had extensive investments in Mexico, and was headed by William G. McAdoo, who was in excellent standing with the U.S. ruling elite. From 1907 to 1919 he was “resident engineer and legal adviser to the Sierra Mining Company, a Duluth, Minnesota corporation” with vast holdings in Mexico. Thereafter he became a “translator and interpreter of Spanish” for the scandal-ridden Senator Albert Fall of New Mexico, though he proudly confessed to having “known” Senator Fall “since 1893” and had “been more or less closely connected with him since 1907.”⁴⁷

Because of his fluent Spanish and extensive archival research on the Spanish colonial background of the southwest and Mexico, Flipper was an expert witness in the process that led to the vitiation of land claims by those of Mexican origin in the contemporary United States.⁴⁸ “I was . . . employed by the town of Nogales, Arizona,” said Flipper, “to prepare its case for presentation to the Land Court. . . . The preparation of this case brought me to the notice of the U.S. Attorney for the Land Court and had the then Attorney General, Mr. Richard Olney, appoint me a Special Agent for the Department of Justice. . . . My duties were to go to Mexico and examine the grants on the ground, make such surveys as I thought necessary, hunt up witnesses, be myself the principal witness at the trial of the cases, hunt up and translate the Spanish and Mexican land laws [on the basis of] which the grants had been made and, in short, prepare the cases

for the United States Attorney. In the course of this work, I collected, translated and arranged, and the Department of Justice published, a collection of Spanish and Mexican land laws running from the 16th century to 1853, which collection the Land Court and the United States Supreme Court used extensively in reaching their decisions.”⁴⁹

In sum, Flipper was a key player in one of the most massive, fraudulent, and treacherous dispossessions in U.S. history.⁵⁰ He was a “hand-writing expert,” which required rare skill, but more importantly “his main contribution was researching and writing much of the compilation of Spanish and Mexican land laws” that allowed Washington to ignore its obligations pursuant to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, that followed its war of aggression against Mexico in the mid-nineteenth century. Ironically, as Flipper was dispossessing Chicanos, he in the process was dispossessed, for his handiwork, which “became the primary authority for both the Court of Private Land Claims and the Supreme Court of the United States on Spanish and Mexican law” was “published under” the name of Matthew G. Reynolds, U.S. Attorney for private claims. This double dispossession was the ultimate metaphor for the role of the Negro in the borderlands.⁵¹

Furthermore, in 1919 Flipper “was responsible for the location, construction and operation of Alaskan railroads while employed by the Department of the Interior,” which facilitated U.S. penetration of lands claimed by the indigenous people there.⁵² Senator Max Cleland of Georgia was not far from the mark when he announced in 1998 that Flipper was “an outstanding example of the Renaissance man. As a surveyor, engineer, translator, inventor, editor, author and pioneer in the oil industry.”⁵³ The talented Flipper even managed the “only newspaper in Nogales, Arizona, the *Sunday Herald*, while the owner served in the territorial legislature.”⁵⁴

Yet, despite his tireless service to Washington and Wall Street, when he returned to his home state of Georgia in his old age, he was virtually penniless. James N. Leiker is no doubt correct in asserting that “no other soldier attained a level of accomplishment and familiarity with Mexico comparable to Flipper’s.”⁵⁵ But this expertise brought no dividends; had Flipper not been a Negro he could have benefited handsomely from the white supremacist cause he served so well.

The tightly wound, light-skinned Flipper was the exact opposite of the freewheeling, dark-skinned Johnson. The latter willingly risked being accused of subversion and sedition by operating from a base in Mexico. Flipper, by contrast, “had refused a professorship at the Military Academy of

Chapultepec, since accepting the appointment would have meant becoming a Mexican citizen” and turning his back on the land of his birth.⁵⁶

Early on Flipper had “interested himself in the famous legend of the lost mine of Tayopa in northern Mexico. It was through this research on the Tayopa mine legend that Flipper came to the attention of Colonel William C. ‘Bill’ Greene, one of the southwest’s most spectacular pioneer promoters and speculators,” and one of a long list of well-connected elites to whom he provided service. While working for Greene, he met Albert Fall. So began their close relationship, that quickly veered from economics to politics to spying in Mexico.⁵⁷

Shortly after he was dismissed from the U.S. military, Flipper found himself in Mexico and ensnared in controversy. He wrote a revealing and insensitive letter to George Ashbridge, a black barber in El Paso, that somehow found its way into print. He was writing from Rancho De Polvorillas, near Meoqui where he was doing surveying work in conjunction with the state of Chihuahua. Flipper’s letter was candid, perhaps excessively so: “I like this sort of life,” he began, “and may yet adopt it, or something like it. . . . The simple life of these Acadians interests me. Their simple habits, their few and easily supplied wants make them the happiest people on earth—were their women virtuous.” Then Flipper made a rapid descent into a deeper cliché: “It seems that women do not lose their caste here when they lose their virtue. . . . The priest at Santa Cruz is living in open adultery and he and his ‘girl’ are received everywhere. . . . A rich man in Chihuahua [was] living openly with his sister. He applied to the legislature for permission to marry her. . . . It was refused, but there was a rich man in Mexico City who married his sister.” He concluded, “Don’t you show this to any newspaperman; it might get me in jail.”⁵⁸ Naturally, his correspondent immediately turned the incendiary letter over to a “newspaperman,” who published it and unleashed a storm of controversy.

The priest he had singled out for mention turned out to be “Presbitero D. Manuel Terrazas, a close relative of the governor of Chihuahua and a member of the richest family in Mexico. . . . It was agreed that Flipper would retain his life and obtain his freedom by abjectly signing a document saying that he apologized [for] slandering the Curate, and retracted his base charges.”⁵⁹

Unlike Johnson, who called in the army with weapons drawn to confront segregationists in Mexico, Flipper was far more conformist in his approach. “In Chihuahua for years I ate at the Delmonico Restaurant, a really first class place run by two Italians,” he recalled later. When “told that

a white man once protested to the owner of the Delmonico restaurant about my eating there” Flipper was pleased when the proprietor of this establishment told him, “I see no difference between your money and his. Besides, that man is a gentleman.”⁶⁰

Courageously confronting Jim Crow was not Flipper’s style. Without major difficulty he worked alongside “southerners and worthy [*sic*] ex-Confederate officers” who had fought to keep blacks in chains. While Johnson sought to leverage the Revolution for domestic gain, Flipper confessed to supplying Senator Albert Fall with “specific intelligence information,” including assessments of Mexican troop strength, support or lack thereof for various factions, and the like. While Jack Johnson confronted powerful U.S. elites, Flipper worked loyally for William F. Buckley, Sr., father of the godfather of modern conservatism, William F. Buckley, Jr., “as engineering and legal consultant for his Pantepec Petroleum Company in Venezuela.”⁶¹

Flipper’s relationship with Mexico did not get off to a pleasant start, as his escapade with the Terrazas family illustrated. Yet from that point forward he was more discreet about his opinions. Thus, in early 1913 he told Senator Fall, his new mentor, that he wished to “raise my feeble voice against intervention in Mexico.” But this was not because of questions about its legality. No, Flipper thought that “a peon government is just as impossible in Mexico as anywhere else. . . . Justice to the semicivilized Mexican people, justice to our American people, requires that we keep hands off in Mexico.”⁶² Ironically, he had retained his bitter anticlericalism, which was at the heart of the Revolution unfolding before his very eyes. But for Flipper the prime consideration was that “the church in Mexico is bitterly anti-American and once in power will not wait [too] long to show its teeth.”⁶³

While Johnson allied himself with Carranza, Flipper believed that he “should be forced out,” while “Villa will have to be gotten rid of in time.” He was vague about the means by which the guerrilla leader should be eliminated. The Spanish-speaking Flipper had “talked with a great many Mexicans of all classes and they all believe, almost to a man, that the only role now being played by the American government in the affairs of Mexico is one of obstruction, albeit unknowingly and unintentionally.”⁶⁴

Flipper was the primary informant for a powerful member of the U.S. Senate and a major economic force in New Mexico—and Mexico—whose interests were directly affected by what was occurring in Mexico. Though Flipper was relatively uninhibited in his correspondence with the

senator, he conceded that "I have been very, very careful not to mix in any way in the troubles in Mexico. I am too anxious to return to Mexico to make enemies of Mexicans on either side of the controversy." Even so, he viewed the Villistas as "hyenas, these vultures of humanity." On the other hand, he could "not believe the American people will allow this government to commit the unspeakable crime of armed intervention in Mexico. . . . I do not want to see intervention in Mexico and pray that it may never come. The Mexicans can settle their own difficulties if left alone." The "solution," he said in early 1914, was to "recognize [Victoriano] Huerta and his government." Villa, on the other hand, was a "proved bandit, rapist, looter, murderer, assassin."⁶⁵ He referred to another Mexican leader as merely having a "swelled head."⁶⁶

Flipper was paid for his labor. In 1919 as Jack Johnson was active among the revolutionaries in Mexico, Senator Fall was vowing to forward to Flipper "three hundred dollars," while reminding him to bring to Washington "your Mexican files of documents, decree orders and promulgations from [the] Diaz regime to present together with any other matter which may be useful to our committee."⁶⁷ But Flipper did not think he was being compensated sufficiently. "For about a year and a half after I came out of Mexico," he said in August 1919, the "Sierra Mining Company paid me a monthly salary of \$100, on which I could easily live. . . . I could manage with that sum until the war began in 1914." But now he was back in El Paso: "There is no work here I can do and an occasional translation . . . adds very little to the funds at my disposal. I am wearing the same clothes I brought out of Ocampo in 1912, having never had money to buy others. They are worn and threadbare, and I am ashamed to appear on the streets. . . . It is painful to tell you this," he told the affluent senator, "but it is the simple truth."⁶⁸

Flipper was at his wit's end, his valuable service having gone unrewarded. Still, Negroes were desperate for heroes, particularly those militantly opposed to the status quo. But how could Flipper be this hero when so much of his life—despite his mistreatment at West Point and thereafter—had been devoted to opposing the Mexican revolutionaries? But desperate Negroes transformed Flipper magically into the hero they thought he should be by announcing not that he was supplying damaging information about Villa but that he was covertly assisting him. He was the "brains back of Villa," said one Negro paper, the *Boston Advertiser*. This "Negro graduate of West Point" was "said to be the right hand man" of the notorious Villa. "Whatever successes Villa has had in a military way,"

said this paper in what may have been a burst of chauvinism, “are declared to be due to Flipper. . . . His influence over Villa is very great.”⁶⁹ Villa’s ability to inflict damage on the United States without Washington being able to respond effectively had made him a folk hero among African Americans, as he had done what many Negroes themselves would have liked to do. So the idea was taken up in the Negro press that Flipper had joined Villa’s rebel band because of his experience of racism. Villa’s features—his “Negroid features such as thick lips and kinky hair”⁷⁰—led some to claim that he was actually of “Caribbean African ancestry.” “In the racist slang of the borderlands, it was alleged that he was really a ‘Carib nigger.’”⁷¹

By and large, the Negro press concluded that Villa and Flipper were in alliance, raiding the borderlands and punishing those who held white supremacy dear. Although an outraged Flipper railed against this myth, it would not die.⁷² In fact, as time passed, it grew. As Flipper’s sister-in-law put it later, “For many years back here” in Atlanta, “we heard that Henry Flipper *was* Pancho Villa.” This myth “endured through the years in some black communities.”⁷³

Finally, an exasperated Flipper felt compelled to plead to his sponsor, Senator Fall, that “the statement I have been the military adviser of Francisco Villa is, of course, a pure and gratuitous fabrication. I have known of him for many years but have never seen him and have never been in sympathy with him, his movements, or his aims. The revolution he is carrying out is one of loot and revenge. . . . Some enemy has had these lies published in order to prejudice my case,” he added darkly. He was considering a “libel suit. . . . From time to time during the last thirty odd years,” he concluded, “the American newspapers have had me occupying all sorts of government positions in Mexico.”⁷⁴

Even the mainstream found it hard to believe—given Johnson’s example—that Flipper would simply turn the other cheek and continue to work loyally on behalf of the United States after his ostracism at West Point, his maltreatment at the hands of the military, and his subsequent circumscribed life chances. In the summer of 1920 Johnson was being marched off to a jail cell and Mexico’s value as a means of leverage for Negroes against Washington was ending. But Flipper was still trafficking in “intelligence reports” that “cover about all there is to know about Mexican matters.” His affluent and powerful patron, Senator Albert Fall of New Mexico, was told: “Please have Lieut. Flipper start a confidential file for [these reports] as we obtain them in a confidential manner.”⁷⁵

Perhaps Flipper would have been better off financially if he had followed the path of the myth laid out for him by his fellow Negroes, rather than his chosen course. For at the end of his labors on behalf of McAdoo, Fall, Buckley, and a host of other powerful men, he arrived in Atlanta in 1931 “penniless and without luggage.” Said his sister-in-law, he “brought nothin’ [*sic*] but himself.”⁷⁶ He had not escaped condemnation by some of his own people either. In the wake of exploding racist tension in Texas, he characterized the all-black “Twenty-fourth Infantry” as “gamblers, thugs, bums and the scum of our people.” This was a “most unfortunate” characterization, according to the NAACP’s W. E. B. Du Bois, indeed, it was “libel.”⁷⁷

So while Jack Johnson endured discredit and dishonor at the hands of a government that despised him and his kind, at least he could enjoy the warm embrace of his people in Harlem. Flipper, who tirelessly served the U.S. elite, returned to Atlanta alone, in anonymity, and penniless. Their different encounters south of the border suggest that Johnson’s decision to leverage the revolutionary process in Mexico for domestic gain was the preferable course for Negro advance, as opposed to Flipper’s path, which benefited neither himself nor Negroes at large.

CHAPTER 3

Bordering on Revolution

“A few words about Mexicans,” wrote the usually well-informed Afro-Caribbean journalist Roi Ottley, “Harlem has few.” This was said over half a century ago and unfortunately this evidence of absence was interpreted widely as the absence of evidence of any meaningful interaction between Negroes and Mexicans, as the dominant “black-white” paradigm reigned supreme. Unfortunately, Ottley contributed to this ignorance by observing that “nowhere in this country is there any real social intercourse between Mexicans and Negroes,” though he did add that “little hostility exists between Mexicans and Negroes.”¹

If Ottley, and other writers who have followed his lead, had paid closer attention to the borderlands and turned their gaze away from the United States east of the Mississippi River, they might have noticed patterns of “race relations” that would have overturned received ideas. For one thing, the relative sparseness of the Negro population and the comparatively large number of those of Mexican origin, Native Americans, and Asian Americans created different dynamics than those provided by the black-white dyad. Even the similarities were different. Ottley could not detect “real social intercourse between Mexicans and Negroes” but in 1893 in El Paso, black men were rallying at City Hall, protesting against the enforce-

ment of antimiscegenation laws that jeopardized their marriages to their Mexican wives. Many were former soldiers who had come west and had employed Mexican women to do their washing, which facilitated their becoming intimate with one another.² While elsewhere in the nation those protesting against antimiscegenation laws might have been lynched, a judge in El Paso in short order threw out the pending cases against these “mixed” families.³ Such unions were not peculiar to the admittedly unique environment that was El Paso and not uncommon in the borderlands.⁴

Frances Hills, born in 1925 in El Paso of a family with deep roots in that mountainous border enclave, was asked “was there much of that here,” that is, “mixed marriages where a black man married a Hispanic woman.” She responded, “Yes. . . . the Williams family, the Turner family . . . the Session family.” Of course, this was “illegal in Texas so they were illegitimate as far as the state was concerned” but “[it] was kind of looked over. The only thing [they] did about it was [to] insist that those children go to the black school.” For in El Paso back then “you had your Hispanic school, you had your white schools, and you had your black schools.” The children of such unions were considered “black,” which *inter alia* made it harder for them to make land claims and press treaty rights than if they had been defined as being of Mexican origin. Moreover, “most of the [Mexicans] were taught by white teachers”—the Negroes were not—which afforded them a ready corps of literate leaders that those of Mexican origin were deprived of, and in turn these teachers gave Negro children a deeper grounding in their history and culture.⁵

George McJunkin, the Negro “cowboy,” illustrated the blacks’ compatibility with Mexicans. “Born a slave in Texas,” he came to New Mexico after the Civil War. Known crudely as “Nigger George,” he gained notoriety as an amateur archaeologist and paleontologist. But it was “Mexican cowboys” who “taught him the things he wanted to know—how to swing a rope and drop a loop over a horse’s head or how to snap a loop up under its heels.” He spoke Spanish, which he had learned from playing with children of Mexican origin. He “liked some of the young Mexican women and they liked him. . . . [He] felt very close to the Mexicans. They and he both were nonwhite and because of that they had many experiences in common.” Negroes were few and far between in Folsom, New Mexico, where he resided; thus, not accidentally, he “acted as a kind of bridge between the Mexicans and the Anglos. His house even looked part Mexican and part Anglo.”⁶



The borderlands contained a diverse “racial” and ethnic mixture, far distant from the “black-white” dyad that defined a good deal of the United States. As the Jim Crow era accelerated at the beginning of the twentieth century, African Americans such as these flocked to the region, where they were a “minority among minorities” that included substantial numbers of Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Asian Americans. Courtesy New Mexico State University.

The progeny of these Negro-Mexican unions are hidden in plain view since they are defined as “black.” Consider Alva Stevenson, for example, a contemporary resident of Los Angeles. Her maternal grandmother was Mexican and a native of San Jose de Gracia, Sinaloa, and a cook in the army of General Elias Calles during the Revolution. She met and married Stevenson’s grandfather, an African American from Kerr County, Texas, during this tumultuous era. He had migrated from Texas to Guadalajara at the turn of the twentieth century in search of work. After becoming fluent in Spanish, he secured a job as foreman on a railroad construction project. After the Revolution, the newlyweds returned to the United States and settled in Nogales, Arizona—a favorite site for “mixed” couples.⁷

Stevenson’s grandparents were not unique. Mexico was an “escape hatch” in terms of employment and a refuge for fugitives from Jim Crow justice. James Westerfield was residing in Louisiana when he was falsely accused of stealing horses—a capital offense. Like many before and since, he fled to Mexico where he rode with Pancho Villa, toiled as a railroad

worker, and changed his name to Theodore Walker. He returned to the United States with Mexican citizenship and resided in El Paso, though he continued to spend a considerable amount of time across the border, in part because his wife was Mexican. He too spoke Spanish.⁸ Today his descendants reside in Los Angeles.

In fact, a number of Negroes along the border spoke Spanish—or “Mexican,” as the vernacular was called—which facilitated their bonding with their Latino counterparts. According to Douglas Daniels, the leading jazz historian, Eddie Durham, the famous African American musician, who grew up in San Carlos, Texas, spoke nothing but Spanish until he was about twelve; as his children grew up, he taught it to them.⁹ W. C. Handy, also a famous musician, recalled that in the early 1900s “in the Far West many colored girls seemed to be ‘passing.’ If they couldn’t possibly be white, then they straightened their hair, learned Spanish and posed as Mexicans.”¹⁰ The husband of Maud Cuney—she was a Texan and former fiancée of W. E. B. Du Bois—“convinced [her] to disavow her black



Because of the perception that opportunities were greater in the borderlands, it was not unknown in the early twentieth century for African Americans to walk for a year or more from the Deep South to small towns like the one pictured here in New Mexico. Courtesy New Mexico State University.

heritage and pass into the white community as "Spanish-American."¹¹ J. Alexander Somerville was born in Jamaica but migrated to Los Angeles where he helped organize a branch of the NAACP in 1913. He was outraged when he first heard of lynchings: "The whole affair was so ghastly that we simply could not believe it, so we attributed it to the mental aberration of a fiction writer." He too was struck by the "passing" of Negroes who took advantage of the fact that those of Mexican origin—despite their general modicum of color—could be designated as "white" in the census. "I know two colored men who looked like Mexicans," he said. "They changed their names from Johnson or Smith to Gomez or Del Gardo."¹²

Did this narrow escape hatch from white supremacy predispose some Negroes to be sympathetic to Mexico during its confrontation with the United States? Or would those willing to take this route also be predisposed to tag along after the heavyweight champion of white supremacy, the United States? Although the answer is unclear, contemporary scholars have been fascinated with the fluidity of "race" in the northern reaches of the territories seized from Mexico in the nineteenth century, which constitute both a geographic and a "racial" border. "Part of what made the West a land of opportunity," writes the historian Linda Gordon, "was the chance to become white. . . . Not a single mining camp in Arizona ever banned blacks, while most prohibited Chinese and many excluded Mexicans. In some places in the U.S. Southwest, blacks were white [*sic*] and Mexicans were not. Making the southwestern mines into 'white man's camps' at the turn of the century meant keeping out Asians, southern and Eastern Europeans and Mexicans, while blacks were sometimes accepted as miners. James Young, a black man at the Contention mine in nearby Tombstone, remarked, 'Si White and I were the first white men in Tombstone after Gird and Schieffelin.' Race had another peculiarity in the West, one that rewrote history: here 'white' usually meant 'American' and 'American' came to mean 'white.'"¹³

Bolstering this idea, a Negro reporter in 1915 in Los Angeles wrote proudly that "fifty-five Negroes, all American citizens, are employed on the state highway near San Jose as a result of protests . . . against the employment of aliens. . . . The aliens were all discharged. About seventy-five men are employed."¹⁴ Speaking of California—San Diego in this case—the scholar Robert Lloyd Carlton largely agrees with Gordon. "Blacks encountered much less racial prejudice and violence in the West than did Chinese and American Indians. . . . Negroes were essentially 'white men'

because of their long participation in Anglo-American culture. . . . The intermediate position of blacks in the West, between the white majority and the other ethnic minority groups who were of even lower status than the blacks, is one of the special characteristics of the Western black experience.”¹⁵ Of course, this presumed Shangri-la was apparently less prevalent in the middle of the nineteenth century, when vigorous efforts began to bar Negroes from the state. But as time passed and the Revolution approached, the Negro Reuben Williams, “who wore a Mexican sombrero, a serape and a sheriff’s star on his vest”—symbolizing the role of African Americans as enforcers of U.S. laws on the border—held the prominent post of leading tour guide in San Diego.¹⁶

The situation in Los Angeles in the first decades of the twentieth century, Scott Tadao Kurashige finds, largely mirrored that in Arizona and San Diego. “Black observers themselves noticed the rise in opportunities that stemmed from escaping the stigma of being the only colored minority,” Kurashige writes. Arna Bontemps, a good friend of Langston Hughes, “reasoned, ‘Perhaps the Japanese and Mexicans are to be thanked. They drew off much of the racial hostility which otherwise might have been concentrated on the Negroes.’” Early in 1909 a white journalist for the *Los Angeles Times* “chastised proponents of Jim Crow white supremacy and argued that ‘indisputable facts’ proved that ‘the Negro Problem’ is a thing that has ‘no existence’ in the city. The writer proceeded to heap unqualified praise upon the ‘comparatively large numbers’ of African-Americans in Los Angeles: ‘We [don’t] hear of them in police courts. They are engaged in business—some of them on a large scale; they are practicing in the professions; they maintain highly organized bodies of Christian worshippers; they have hundreds of good, comfortable homes and not a few that rival in elegance and luxury the best in the whole city; they buy and read books; their children attend the schools and often outstrip their white companions in ability; music and art appeal to them and are fostered and advanced by them; they are good, God-fearing law abiding men and women.’ Indeed, it is not stretching things to say that the *Times* considered African Americans to be a ‘model minority.’” In the 1920s the “Assistant Superintendent of the Pullman Company” may have agreed, for “he preferred to hire African Americans because they were less ‘antagonistic’ than Mexicans.”¹⁷ The Jamaican immigrant J. Alexander Somerville was stunned to find upon moving to Los Angeles that “there were no so-called Negro districts. Coloured people lived in scattered neighborhoods all over the city.”¹⁸

Somerville's fellow NAACP leader, W. E. B. Du Bois, was similarly enthusiastic about Los Angeles. Visiting there in 1913 as the Revolution brewed across the border, he was delighted. It was "wonderful," he thought. "The air was scented with orange blossoms and the beautiful homes lay low crouching on the earth as they loved its scents and flowers. Nowhere in the United States is the Negro so well and beautifully housed, nor the average of efficiency and intelligence in the colored population so high." But when he "plunged" into the other giant of the borderlands—Texas—his enthusiasm plummeted. "One shivers at the 'Jim Crow' cars [there.] . . . After the luxury of the West and the public courtesy and hospitality, the dirt and impudence of a land where to travel at all meant twelve to twenty-four hours in the most primitive accommodations, was an awful change."¹⁹

As late as the 1940s, William Mandel, the activist, continued to echo these enthusiastic sentiments about the prospects for the Negro. While visiting the fields of California, he noticed that "the lettuce country had a distinct hierarchy of nationalities: whites on top, of course, then Blacks, followed by Filipinos, Chinese and Mexicans last. Blacks were the top of the bottom clearly because they were not a serious factor in farm labor and not foreigners."²⁰ And he might have added that their crucial role in "winning the west," crushing Native American resistance, policing the border, and invading Mexico set them apart, marked them as politically reliable and helped to solidify their anomalous status of being at "the top of the bottom." Moreover, the lack of a clear association with an identifiable sovereign other than the United States—unlike the Mexicans, Japanese, Germans, and others—gave them a unique status.

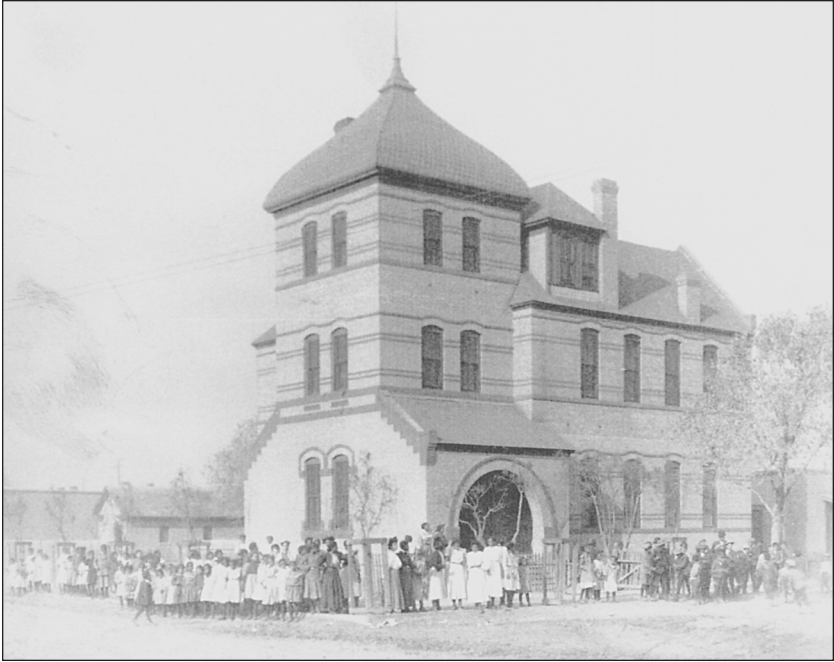
One must be careful, however, not to accept an overly rosy portrait of Negro life along the border. After his initial euphoria, Du Bois had to concede that Los Angeles was "not paradise . . . the color line is there and sharply drawn."²¹ In the eastern part of Texas, for example, African Americans would have a hard time recognizing any picture that depicted them as "white." The Lone Star state, which bragged about being a leader, was near the top when it came to lynching Negroes, yet "nothing was mentioned about lynching or a state anti-lynching law in the Texas legislature throughout the period 1900 to 1925. In 1905, though, a group of citizens from Houston petitioned Governor Lanham that the state permit Negroes guilty of assaults upon white women to be punished by mobs."²² Texas had few peers in the persecution of Negroes. It was "second only to Geor-

gia in anti-black lynchings in 1916 with nine lynchings occurring that year in the eastern cotton belt.”²³

Missing from many analyses of the peculiar role of the Negro in the West is recognition of the close dependence of their status upon the pre-eminent position they played as guardians of U.S. interests along the border. They were often the men wielding the weapons and enjoying the power and prestige that flowed from the barrel of a gun in a land grounded in white supremacy. This made for a contradictory situation, as Du Bois observed about Nogales, Arizona. While there was a plethora of “colored troops” there and also “several large property owners among the colored people,” the “colored children of this town” had to adhere to “the state law [that] requires separate schools for white and colored.”²⁴

The Negro troops were particularly important in the region surrounding El Paso, where the Negro community was largely a product of the railway industry and the military. In 1910, as Revolution was fermenting across the border, El Paso, a West Texas metropolis which adjoined New Mexico, had a population of 1,400 Negroes out of a total population of over 37,000.²⁵ They “enjoyed a degree of political and economic success unmatched elsewhere in Texas. El Paso’s African-American community retained these advantages throughout the twentieth century, with some local Blacks even attaining wealth and prominence.”²⁶ The city was “more western than southern,” said one analyst, “and because the number of Negroes did not pose a threat to the economic or political life of the community as it did in many areas of the south, they could achieve a greater degree of political and economic freedom than elsewhere throughout the South.” But “many whites regarded the black man in uniform as a symbol of authority, a threat to white supremacy. This attitude resulted in considerable racial strife in the early 1900s,” and gave rise to a contradiction: an uneasy “racial” liberalism coexisting with—and generated by—a nagging fear of the presence of armed Negroes in the midst of Euro-Americans.²⁷

Drusilla Nixon was the spouse of the plaintiff in a landmark U.S. Supreme Court case that eroded the “white primary,” which had circumscribed black voting rights. Born in 1899, she recalled years later that “my husband used to say that if El Paso hadn’t been in the state of Texas . . . they wouldn’t have had any segregation laws.” But dousing with cold water the idea that “black” meant “white” there, she quickly added, “as it was we couldn’t go to any shows and we, of course, couldn’t go to any restaurants.” They attended a “separate school.” But she still found El Paso



El Paso, Texas, where this school was located, had one of the largest populations of African Americans in the borderlands during the course of the Mexican Revolution. Many in this community found that they could escape the mundane indignities of Jim Crow Texas by crossing the border into Mexico where they could be served without rancor in restaurants and shop freely in stores, activities barred to them in their homeland. Courtesy El Paso Historical Society.

“different” and “much better than in other cities. I remember a woman who moved out here during the war. She was from some little town in East Texas and she said, ‘Oh my. This is wonderful!’” In “most places you live in a ghetto, but not in El Paso,” said Mrs. Nixon. Her husband was a doctor and “his practice was almost entirely Mexican,” though he had some “Anglo patients. We used to say it was the United Nations in his office. He had quite a few Philipinos [*sic*]. . . . The most he ever charged was \$2 for an office call and \$4 for a house call.” Remarkably, this Negro doctor routinely examined intimately white men and women alike, at a time when close contact between black and white was the most sacred of taboos, then prosecuted lawsuits in Texas to undermine white supremacy.

When Mrs. Nixon was asked, "Did you perceive any prejudice on the part of Mexican Americans toward Blacks here?" she responded, "Now, with our association with them, no. But I think probably with another class of Mexicans there might have been a difference. But I think with that class they were prejudiced against their own people." She may have been thinking of lighter-skinned, often upwardly mobile "Mexican Americans," who clung precariously to the hallowed status of "white" and were a fixture in the region. "Not here in El Paso, but there were many places going toward Houston where they would refuse to serve Mexicans. I remember one time one of the officials of Mexico City [had to have] the Highway Patrol escort them through Texas, because they were stopped one time . . . and so, after that, the Highway Patrol would always escort them through Texas." Mrs. Nixon, who "studied very hard to be really fluent in Spanish" said with a tinge of emotion, "I love El Paso, and I always have. . . . My husband felt the same way because he came here in 1910 and he left here once. He went up to Denver for [a] week, and never left this town until I *insisted*—it was about 1944. . . . I just said, 'The children and I are going to leave you if you don't go'"²⁸ (emphasis in original).

Frances Hills, another longtime black woman resident of El Paso, also recalls her Mexican and Mexican American neighbors fondly. Her family owned row houses, had Mexican American tenants, and rented to them at \$2 per month. This class-bound landlord-tenant relationship may have been indicative of a "racial" hierarchy where Negroes were not at the bottom. Yet they did not attend school together, except for those "Hispanics that were mixed with black." Like many in El Paso she spent a considerable amount of time across the border in Juarez. "Did you find the atmosphere in Juarez very accepting?" she was asked. "Oh, yes" was her enthusiastic response. "It was very open, at least I never had any problems in Mexico when I went over there and everything. But of course I spoke the language, so that might have made a big difference. . . . You could do all kinds of things over there and you were respected by all the people." She thought this reflected the "pretty good rapport between the black and Hispanic community." This "rapport" was helped by the fact that a leader of El Paso Negroes was "R. W. Lopez," a Pullman porter with roots in both communities. "He might have been a Cuban or something like that, West Indian descendant," or he may have been Chicano.

El Paso may have been paradise to those from East Texas—and neighboring Albuquerque, which had even less segregation, was better still—but there was "racial" segregation there, unlike Juarez. And the irony of

Negroes being forced to attack a nation that did not discriminate against them on behalf of a nation that did, was at times too much to bear. Thus, recalled Frances Hills, for a while there was segregation on streetcars in her hometown. She recalled, "I am told that the soldiers at Fort Bliss and their resistance to this kind of thing—because you would have a black guy standing up in the back and plenty of seats in the front—and their resistance to this kind of thing was the thing that kind of got the situation such that they somehow ignored the possibility blacks were sitting in areas where they aren't supposed to sit." That is, black resistance to segregation, particularly by black soldiers, led to de facto desegregation, just as their resistance had nullified antimiscegenation statutes. Streetcars were boycotted during this era to bolster the de facto desegregation, though there may have been some backsliding after the crisis with Mexico peaked. "I recall my grandfather saying it wasn't until much later, that they put up those [segregation] signs. . . . The impression I have gotten over the years is that El Paso is just more or less open. We were all friends and lived and worked together until later. Then, I guess in the 1920s, I don't know . . . my guess is that then, where there were more blacks in the community"—and tensions with Mexico had abated—"there was this separation pushing [forward]."²⁹

The recollections of Leona Washington dovetail with those of Drusilla Nixon and Frances Hills. Her parents came to El Paso from Yazoo, Mississippi, in the "early 1900s." He was a "blacksmith's helper with the Southern Pacific" railroad and they were "very close friends" with their neighbors who were "Mexican Americans." They were his "playmates" growing up. "There were some whites in the neighborhood," she recalled, "but eventually they would move out when a lot of blacks or Mexican Americans moved in." She "attended the Mexican theaters" and enjoyed cinema without having to endure the segregation that she would have suffered in "white" theaters. Her family also "went to Juarez to eat too," not least because "there wasn't any segregation there." She too recalled segregated streetcars—she was born in 1928—but "no one would make an issue of it if a military person would sit beyond the sign or something like that." She "couldn't go" to the local university, "Texas Western," "we had to go to Prairie View." "There were quite a few [mixed marriages]," she recollected, "especially with the Mexican Americans and blacks and when the military came it was on the uprise [*sic*]. . . . Many of them went to New Mexico to get a [marriage] license." She recalled Negroes operating "drugstores, restaurants, and barbershops," partly because there were few

menial jobs available, and also because cheap Mexican labor was available right along the border.³⁰

Ruth Nash King was yet another black woman who grew up in El Paso. Her father—who too was from Mississippi—also worked for the railroad, as a porter. El Paso was the symbolic and actual dividing line on Jim Crow cars going west or north. Immediately after leaving this town and traveling toward New Mexico, for example, a Negro did not have to endure Jim Crow, while departing in other directions Jim Crow reigned—except, of course, going south toward Mexico. “As soon as you got to New Mexico, then there was no problem. There was no Jim Crow [car],” she recalled happily. Unlike in Mississippi, in El Paso one could try on clothes in stores, which made a major difference in one’s everyday existence, she thought. It was not only the soldiers who eroded Jim Crow: “There were so few of us that nobody really bothered too much about just a small group of blacks.” She “went to Houston when” her son “was small. He said, ‘you just go for miles and miles and never see anything but black people,’” a major change from West Texas. Like her counterparts, she too had “Mexican friends” in “preschool and early school.”³¹

On the other hand, some “Anglos,” that is, those of other than wholly Mexican origin, possessed “racial” memories that were quite distinct from those of the Negroes. Aurelia Phillips was born in 1901; her mother was Mexican, and her grandfather was El Paso’s first mayor. She was bilingual and not terribly unique. “There were quite a few of them,” she recalled later, “mostly their mothers were Mexican and their fathers were Anglos. At that time we didn’t call them Anglos. Everybody was Mexican and Anglos were called whites.” As for Negroes, “we just knew that they were black. And, of course, they were segregated, but we didn’t mind that.” She thought “they were perfectly satisfied with the condition which they received,” because “the Negro is a different race altogether. Even their bone structure is different.”³² Such attitudes shed light on the recollections of Luis Varela, born in 1908 in Chihuahua. He grew up in Clint, Texas, and recalled, “I remember at one time a colored man came to Clint, and immediately they chased him away. He was running like a deer—running like a deer.”³³

Texas, indeed the entire region that once belonged to Mexico, was a series of “racial” microclimates. It was akin to driving from Death Valley to Santa Barbara, where the temperature would be blazing hot to start with, then drop to steaming, and wind up mildly temperate. When these

microclimates were forced to confront the impact of the Mexican Revolution, with border raids, emboldened Negro soldiers, and all the rest, severe "racial" conflict was sure to erupt. And it did.

Between the quotidian details of daily life and periodic pogroms there was constant discrimination that could quash any opportunity, recollections of harmony and fellowship notwithstanding. E. G. Hall of the NAACP chapter in Bisbee, Arizona, would have been surprised to hear that his (tenuous) U.S. citizenship was a source of great privilege. In the summer of 1915, as the border was engulfed by bloody cross-border raids from Mexico, he informed his organization's leadership that "the colored citizens here are debarred from all labor except janitorial. . . . The mining . . . is given to foreigners and there's practically nothing to induce colored people to stay or [migrate] here."³⁴ Senator Albert Fall of New Mexico made the same assessment in his own state. In 1917, as his nation was about to call on Negroes to fight a war purportedly to make the world safe for democracy, he declared that "with reference to the settlement of colored people in New Mexico, I cannot give . . . very much encouragement. We have a sparsely settled state. . . . In the coal mines, Italians, Poles and other foreigners are generally employed, as they are in the state of Colorado. In the quartz mines very few colored men have ever sought employment, at least, this has been my experience in Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Old Mexico."

On his own ranch, "115 miles north of El Paso," he had "from time to time employed color[ed] labor." And here one can see why some Negroes would walk all year from Georgia to reach New Mexico. His "wife has always preferred colored people around the house, but as you know, unless there are several families together the colored people are not satisfied to remain. . . . Several times I have taken in colored men from Texas but have never established any colonies or any number of families on my place or places." Yet, he added remarkably, "If I could secure four or five families of colored people, good farmers, who would be satisfied to stay, I would replace my Mexican labor or tenants with such families very cheerfully." The "colored people appear to get along very well . . . with the Mexicans." But had he replaced one with the other their relationship would certainly have suffered a downturn.³⁵

In neighboring Tucson the NAACP branch was made up of janitors, clerks, gardeners, porters, manual laborers, cooks, barbers, teachers, tailors, maids, and the like. They had work, yes, but almost all would have denied that they had privilege.³⁶ Can one reconcile the different visions of blacks

along the border, with some scholars suggesting that U.S. nationality trumped all else and others maintaining just as stoutly that, no, it was "race" that mattered? Actually, the borderlands were a harbinger of the situation we have today. In contrast with most of the nation in the early twentieth century, some Negroes along the border had opportunities that were simply not present elsewhere. But this is not to suggest that all Negroes were living lives of privilege: far from it.

In the early twentieth century this was still a frontier, with all the flux, disorder, and unsophisticated economic infrastructure this term implies, along with the resultant opportunities. Further, as Arna Bontemps observed, the prime targets of racism were the more numerous Native Americans and those of Mexican origin, not to mention Asian Americans. The Negroes were disproportionately military men, a potent symbol of authority. Morris Hunter Jones resided in Naco, Arizona, during this era. "It was a border junction point for transfer of freight and passengers from Cananea, Sonora and way points on the Cananea, Rio Yaqui and Pacific to the El Paso and Pacific," he recalled later, observing, "my memories of these years are remarkably keen." The "American side of the town was tiny, three or four hundred as I remember it. The town must have had better days, for what past importance I never discovered, because [there] was a large vault[ed], opera house, long abandoned by then. I remember quite clearly there were a number of rooms that must have been used as offices as my few companions and myself discovered hundreds of cancelled checks . . . we used as play money. The Mexican side of town was much larger and more important, the shops of the CRY and P being located there. A large part of [our] local shopping was done on the 'other side' in stores that were invariably run by Chinese." Because there were few Negroes, bigotry was directed primarily against the Mexicans and Chinese rather than the Negroes.

This isolated village baking in the sun was a contested site during the Revolution and heavily dependent on Negro troopers for survival. As Jones recalled it, "The one story brick school house was located a hundred or so yards from the border, so when the teacher heard a battle shaping up she would clamber up to the belfry to reconnoiter. I do not know what her criterion of safety was but the time would come when she would shag us toward home. . . . A few of us would sneak around, climb to the top of the railroad water tank conveniently located on a spur practically on the border and climb up [to] watch the activities."³⁷ This live military pageant inevitably starred Negro troopers battling Mexicans.

A similar situation obtained in El Paso. In the spring of 1914, the powerful New Mexico politician, Thomas Catron, told the U.S. Secretary of State that "there should be a much larger body of troops sent" to El Paso "than is now there." Apparently there were about "4,500 men or more" of Mexican origin in local prisons "and if they should break loose and be supplied with arms, they might destroy the city of El Paso, which has about 50,000, there being less than 2,000 troops as I understand of the United States Army at Fort Bliss." As he saw it, if this came to pass, Negro troopers would be the major defenders of the town.³⁸

Because the Negro trooper was so indispensable, other Negroes enjoyed opportunities that their compatriots nationally could only dream about. William Neal, for example, was born in 1848 to a Negro man and Cherokee woman and "given the Indian name of 'Bear Sitting Down.' When he was about nineteen years old he teamed up with Buffalo Bill Cody as a fellow scout, traveling companion and servant." He arrived in Tucson about 1878 and, despite his richness of melanin "was awarded the government contract to carry mail from Tucson to Mammoth." This job allowed him to accumulate enough capital to build the Mountain View Hotel in 1894. Neal operated the hotel until his death in an automobile accident in 1936.³⁹ During his lifetime celebrities and affluent visitors streamed into the hotel from all over the nation and indeed the world, attracted by the stunning vistas Arizona had to offer.⁴⁰ It would be hard to imagine a William Neal in Mississippi or even East Texas during this period.

By 1910 Tucson's black population was a mere 222, "an increase of 61 percent from 1900." This small population was in stark contrast to the Negro populations of Mississippi or East Texas. African Americans in southern Arizona were not a comparable "threat," particularly given the challenge emerging from Mexico and from Native Americans.⁴¹

But even the most affluent Negroes had to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous racist fortune. Neal's father-in-law, Wiley Box, was "considered the first African-American pioneer in Tucson. . . . He was supposedly the son of an English physician and an African-American woman in New Orleans." It is "probable that he actually arrived in 1879" in Tucson. He "was killed when his legs were set on fire as a practical joke in 1913." He was seventy-six at the time of his death.⁴²

This tragic murder occurred as "amateur blackface productions" surged in popularity in Arizona, as they did throughout the nation. But in Arizona the spectators were more diverse: "Mexicans and Anglos in the audience cheered."⁴³ As this example suggests, being a small minority dwarfed

by a substantially larger population of Mexican origin and a powerful “Anglo” community, was not always easy—and could be deadly. According to one study, “Blacks in border towns like Laredo, where the population had dropped from 205 to 41 between 1900 and 1920, refrained from public gatherings or even from venturing outdoors often, since Hispanics and Anglos regarded their presence as such an oddity.”⁴⁴ Moreover, it is important that Neal and Box were both of “mixed race.” Perhaps their high aspirations and lofty accomplishments were partly attributable to their “mixed” ancestry and their lighter skin.

Still, Laredo should not be seen as a metaphor for the black experience along the border. For it was to New Mexico that Negroes began to flock en masse at the beginning of the twentieth century to found all-black towns. The appropriately named Blackdom, New Mexico, was begun by a former “Buffalo Soldier.”⁴⁵ Other Negroes flocked to Vado, New Mexico—a “dream in the desert”—in yet another early-twentieth-century attempt to form an all-black town and escape Jim Crow. A twenty-minute drive from El Paso, some Negroes walked for a year from Georgia to reach this site. This suggests what a palpable difference they saw between the borderlands and the region where most of their people resided.⁴⁶

Being along the border, not having become an actual part of the United States until 1912, having been a part of Mexico until recently, and possessing a diverse mix of peoples because it was a border checkpoint, Tucson (and southern Arizona generally) offered Negroes a diverse range of opportunities. These increased as the Revolution unfolded and Mexico made a bold bid for the loyalties of Negroes. In Tucson in the 1890s, “horses and buggies, rented carry-alls or hacks brought African Americans . . . to San Javier Mission for Sunday worship services. . . . Mexicans and Native Americans were also in attendance. . . . Tucson’s small African American Catholic population could and did attend church services everywhere, but one, Blessed Martin was known for its African American ministry. One early attender takes pride in the ‘color-blindness’ of services, saying although social opportunities were limited, Whites, Native Americans and Mexicans also came to Blessed Martin.”⁴⁷

This was occurring at a time when 11 a.m. on Sunday morning was generally the most segregated hour in the rest of the nation. Laura Nobles, an African American, recalled that “in those days the services were in Latin,” yet despite the strangeness of the language, she “never felt separated because of race.” Negroes in Tucson supped on “Spanish Cornbread” and

“fried bread (Mexican)” regularly, a further reflection of their closeness to their neighbors. Negroes began moving to the region in greater numbers after Arizona joined the Union in 1912, particularly those who thought the hot, dry temperature would improve their health. Back then, “the ‘barber profession was ‘all black,’” while the “Southern Pacific Railroad hired blacks in sufficient numbers.” There were “‘colored cooks,’ too many to mention” in fact, and Negroes “routinely worked at the hotels in town.”⁴⁸ The region also attracted smugglers,⁴⁹ particularly during the revolutionary era, thereby diverting the attention of the authorities and creating opportunities for Negro smugglers and entrepreneurs to engage in the “primitive accumulation of capital.”

U.S. Customs was heavily dependent on Negro soldiers to monitor presumed contraband. G. B. Mason, Special Deputy Collector of the U.S. Customs Service, confided in 1914 that “the practice at the Port of Nogales is to allow the soldiers (colored) to ‘heft’ each trunk intended for exportation to Mexico and unless unusually heavy, the trunk is not opened. There has been no objection or complaint made against such practice and I would suggest that the same procedure be followed [elsewhere].”⁵⁰ However, despite their best efforts Negro soldiers were often unable to prevent the revolutionaries from obtaining firearms and explosives in the United States and bringing them into Mexico. These firearms fueled the revolution and often “blew back” into the United States in the form of border raids. Because of their pivotal policing role Negroes were also able to get involved in smuggling. The United States knew, for example, that there was a “movement of arms in transit through the United States from one port of Mexico to another.”⁵¹

Recall that in 1914 the United States feared that Japan and Germany were allying themselves with Mexico and with Negroes in a pincer movement against the United States. Repeatedly Japanese nationals in particular were apprehended at the border because they were carrying contraband of various sorts. As the *Bisbee Daily Review* reported in 1907, “vile Japanese halted at border . . . with more than \$20,000 in good hard cash in their possession and the allegation that they had \$11,000 more in bank in San Francisco. Haki Washita and two female slaves were caught attempting to improperly cross the line at Naco yesterday. . . . Inspector Jones has recently turned a number of Japanese of various character back at Naco.”⁵² In 1918, as the Revolution continued, the Nogales Chief of Police seized “two husky young men who said they came here to look for work. Incidentally, they had in their possession a map of Mexico, a rough drawing of

roads, connecting with Nogales, Naco, Cananea and other points and lists of names of officials and Germans in the City of Mexico.” However, the men claimed to be “Swiss. They were fairly well supplied with money and one had a new repeating rifle.”⁵³ Repeatedly, Customs had to contend with questionable Japanese and German visitors and “importers” at the border. They had to be vetted by Negro soldiers to whom the very same nations appealed repeatedly.⁵⁴

Overall, Negro soldiers had to police a border repeatedly violated by revolutionaries and their allies, and by blacks seeking to create fortunes that could only be dreamed of elsewhere. One has to be cautious in interpreting the records, however, for the voluminous evidence of Negro smuggling may be the result of the authorities’ disproportionate desire to arrest this group rather than others—thus creating the impression that Negroes dominated the trade in contraband. Nevertheless, it is apparent that some Negroes saw the revolutionary border as a gold mine of opportunity. Among those involved were “C. C. Lee, alias ‘Kid’ Lee, colored, a notorious tenderloin character,” accused of being a major smuggler of drugs.⁵⁵ This desperado jumped bail and fled to Juarez, Mexico. The “captain of El Paso detectives” was “conferring” with the “Mexican authorities with [the] view of arranging to secure the presence of Lee on this side of the international line.” However, the Mexican “authorities” were not keen to return Lee and wanted at the very least “no meager money consideration for aiding in matters of this kind.”⁵⁶ The mobile “Kid Lee,” who smuggled opium, moved from southern Arizona to west Texas to Mexico, eluding his captors. He took advantage of the fact that the U.S. authorities had their hands full seeking to prevent the revolution from spreading to the north and therefore had less time and opportunity to stop him.

“Charles Williams, colored,” “a fugitive on an opium smuggling charge” was also being sought by U.S. authorities. About five feet six inches tall, rather heavy set with a “dark complexion,” he was said to be “associating” in Douglas, Arizona, “with a little yellow Negro named Bond, an ex-soldier.”⁵⁷ Then there was “one George Maren,” who was “selling morphine and other narcotic drugs in Douglas.” “He occupies an old adobe house” where the “drugs are kept in a chimney hole.”⁵⁸

Indeed, the U.S. authorities were concerned that Negro drug smugglers may have been in league with Negro troopers along the border, and that both the smugglers and the troopers—but particularly the latter—were susceptible to entreaties from foreign foes, including bribes. Thus, from

Douglas, Arizona, came the report that “in every organization of troops stationed at El Paso, Douglas, Columbus, Nogales and Naco there are from two to twelve drug users, cocaine and morphine are the most common drugs used.” These intoxicants were “introduced from Juarez to El Paso” and “many soldiers are becoming habitual users and losing their value as soldiers.” The El Paso authorities opined that “traffic in both opium and cocaine has always been extensive in this city, and is almost entirely confined to Negroes.”⁵⁹

The borderlands indicate the dilemma of the Negro at the time of the Revolution. On the one hand, the fluidity of the “racial” scene created opportunity, if only for smuggling drugs. As the U.S. authorities freely acknowledged, “considerable opium” was “being smuggled into Douglas from Mexico by United States soldiers,”⁶⁰ some of whom were Negro and some of whom were not, though the former seemed to be under greater scrutiny.⁶¹ On the other hand, it was possible that a war on drugs had morphed into a war on Negroes.

Others involved in mass smuggling included cowboys. A “confidential agency of the constitutional government in Mexico” informed the U.S. Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, that “American cowboys are frequently crossing the boundary line between Mexico and the United States to smuggle cattle from our enemy’s camps in the state of Coahuila into Texas and that on each occasion when they have been caught by our forces they allege that they are innocent and that as American citizens they ought to be released.”⁶² Of course, “racial” concern about smuggling did not arise when the culprits were “Anglo.”

In their defense the U.S. authorities could argue that unlike other groups, Negroes were being targeted by assumed or actual enemies of the United States—particularly from “colored” Japan—and that opium smuggling may have been part of something more subversive. This was apparently what the authorities in Nogales had in mind when they got wind of “Charley Brown, a one armed Negro addicted to the use of drugs.” He was “rendering assistance to the local police as a stool pigeon, and . . . states that a certain [Asian] in Tucson known by the name of ‘Doc’ is conducting a gambling and opium den under police protection. . . . The one armed Negro is probably the same Negro who was arrested on numerous occasions in both Nogales, Sonora and Arizona and was finally given a limited time in which to make his final departure from Nogales. . . . He is well known to both the civil and federal authorities at this port and [figures

prominently in] stories about the smuggling of opium and other narcotics." The easily identifiable Negro suspect "was found to be very unreliable as [a] stool pigeon" but the U.S. authorities continued to take a great interest in him.⁶³

Because a heavy proportion of the soldiers along the border were Negroes, the authorities argued that it was inevitable that a significant percentage involved in smuggling would be black, given their mobility, regular income, and the prestige they continued to enjoy even after they discarded their uniforms. For it did appear that discharged soldiers, who had once monitored smuggling, knew where the holes in the system were and decided to take advantage. A "Negro, Spencer Williams," was "believed to [be] actively engaged in the handling of or smuggling of narcotics at Douglas." He was a "discharged soldier" stationed "previously at Columbus, N.M." Heavy and well-built and usually "well-dressed," he too had a distinctive limb, a "broken left arm . . . which, because of having been broken, he carries in a strained position at his side." He was "sufficiently prosperous to drive a Buick or a Cadillac automobile." He was intimately involved with a "Negro woman known in army circles as 'Pretty Babe,'" and was "living in Tucson," and doing quite well.⁶⁴

The U.S. authorities had a real problem. This was the beginning of an era of mass transportation and communications—automobiles were becoming a mass consumer item, airplanes were beginning to take off and land regularly, telephones were becoming more common—which increased the opportunity for smuggling of all sorts. The growing presence of the Ku Klux Klan, which "occurred as early as 1916 in Nogales,"⁶⁵ presented another problem. It was evident that it had dug deep roots in Arizona when R. E. L. Shepherd, county attorney in the state's powerful Maricopa County, admitted to being part of the KKK, though he "thought Ku Klux was [a] club of business men. . . . Later [he] found out that the business men's association was the outside name for what is known as the Ku Klux Klan."⁶⁶ Unlike Shepherd, Klan members were not confused about their purpose, in that "the pass word of the meetings for these clandestine operators was 'white supremacy.'"⁶⁷ In succeeding years the KKK "had plenty of highly placed supporters" in Arizona, which became a bulwark of conservatism generally. The chief prosecutor in Phoenix was a member, as was the city editor of the leading newspaper and "Arizona's secretary of state and state treasurer, the Mayor of Phoenix, scores of prominent Phoenix business and civic leaders."

However, in Tucson, along the border, whose defense rested upon the broad shoulders of Negro soldiers, "the Klan never became active." In any event, "because there were so few blacks to harass in Arizona, the chief recipients of Klan wrath, aside from lawbreakers were Roman Catholics," with "enough hatred left over to torment Jews and Mormons as well."⁶⁸ Even the anti-Catholicism was connected to anti-Mexican sentiment. Indeed, "anti-Spanish language and anti-Roman Catholic religion" bias, which tended to go hand-in-hand, blocked New Mexico from becoming a state for the longest time. Such bigotry "went back to the time of England's war with Spain. Southern states in particular" blocked statehood.⁶⁹

The situation in El Paso was similar to that in Tucson. Leona Washington remarked: "I don't think that [the KKK] were very, very prominent here in El Paso. El Paso has been more or less a bit subtle."⁷⁰ Ruth Nash King concurred, saying that in any case, the Klan "were after the Mexicans."⁷¹ The brigadier general and writer S. L. A. Marshall remembered random mass beatings in El Paso of Mexicans and Mexican Americans at times of tension along the border. "I couldn't believe it," he recalled later. He agreed with Negro El Pasoans that his hometown was "not really Texas; its interests are in New Mexico and Mexico." There was a KKK, which was implicated in those beatings, and he did think it had a "stronghold within city government" and "Texas government." This was part and parcel of El Paso being a "violent community." But unlike Tucson he did not think El Paso was hostile toward the Jewish community, which was "always in my recollection, pretty much at one with the rest of the community—more so than almost any city I know in the United States."⁷²

Tucson and El Paso were key cities along an often tense border, whose sizable complement of armed Negro soldiers kept many white supremacists under control. But in Yuma, Arizona, an important stop on the way to southern California, a different reality obtained—or so thought the Negroes there. In 1916, as a plan emerged to liquidate the "Anglo" presence in the region, Negroes thought they too were in mortal danger. A group of Negroes felt compelled to "beg to appeal to" the U.S. Attorney General, "to know if there be any way for Colored people . . . to secure protection in Arizona while here for legitimate employment."

It seems that a "small colony of" Negroes had "secured employment in the vicinity of Somerton in the Yuma Valley recently and built shacks on some vacant grounds about a quarter of a mile north of the little town . . . where we lived . . . while we worked about the neighborhood, picking or rather chopping cotton, caring for stock, etc." On 26 June they "were vis-

ited by Logan Smith . . . constable and deputy sheriff, who told us to get out of the country. . . . Seven masked men some of whom we recognized and can positively identify came to our houses all armed with Winchesters and side arms [and] compelled us to get immediately out of our beds, go without clothing, would not permit us to go back for shoes or money . . . marched us at the end of guns to the road leading toward Yuma and told us to beat it and not show up there about Somerton again. One of the women . . . was painfully bruised in the ribs and stomach with the end of a gun and several shots were fired at one of the men who tried to run away when we were told that they were taking us down where the shovels were to bury us. Our four houses were burned with all our clothing, trunks, money . . . taken by some of the mob . . . leaving us practically naked without a cent on the public highway. We lay by the road leading to Yuma that night and the next morning begged enough old clothing from Mexican people in the vicinity to avoid a charge of indecent exposure.”⁷³

From their cruel dispossession to their rescue by “Mexican people,” this tragic episode reflected the experience of many black people along the border. The authorities’ failure to respond was also typical. The County Attorney in Yuma stated bluntly that “I do not consider that the matter warrants my taking any steps to protect the parties.” As he saw it, a “short distance from the center of [Somerton] was situated a colony of colored people who came here from various places; some from [the] Imperial Valley” in California. “This colony has given the officers an unwarranted amount of trouble, it being a rendezvous of bootleggers among the colored people” and a site of “hilarity and licentiousness.” The “good, law-abiding citizens of Somerton and the Valley, took it upon themselves to rid the community of this undesirable colony of colored people. I doubt very much that they have done anything unreasonable in ordering the residents of the colony to make their homes elsewhere.”⁷⁴ And there it stood.

The besieged Negroes of Yuma should not have been shocked by their government’s response. In 1915 Governor George Hunt of Arizona unveiled his true sentiments when, amidst applause and guffaws, he related a “‘nigger’ joke to loosen up” an audience.⁷⁵ This upstanding son of the (former) slave south was the “grandson of a graduate of William and Mary.” His grandfather was a “plantation owner” and “his family was among and related to the notable southern families of the revolutionary period.”⁷⁶ It would have been unrealistic to expect such a man to treat blacks as “white”—even if his state’s security ultimately rested on the sturdy backs of Negro soldiers.

In Clifton, Arizona, a “disproportionate number” of “Anglos . . . came from the South” and were “supporters” of the Confederacy and later of Jim Crow. They frequently transferred their antiblack prejudice to Mexicans. Ironically, if Mexicans had appeared in the plantation South, they might have been classified as white or at least not black. But the southern whites’ Jim Crow ideology was making Mexicans the equivalent of blacks in the Southwest. “By 1904 the drift was already toward a new form of the American binary, Anglo or Mexican—in its uglier form, gringo or greaser.”⁷⁷

Arizona was not Virginia. Antimiscegenation laws—a major expression of white supremacy and anti-Negro animus in Virginia—had a much broader practical application in Arizona, encompassing Asians among others.⁷⁸ The borderlands confounded the color line, unsettling categories that were thought to be immutable. Nonetheless, one thing *did* seem to be permanent, namely, white supremacy enforced at great cost to life.

CHAPTER 4

A Border Drenched in Blood

Texas, the largest state in terms of square miles in the Union's mainland and perhaps its most violent too, was buffeted by sharply contradictory forces during the revolutionary era. On the one hand, like much of the nation it was hostile to the Negro, with a large KKK membership and widespread terror. Texas fully lived up to its reputation of being the state where the "Old South" met the "Wild West." On the other hand, the Revolution was just across the border, promising a better life and a profound setback for white supremacy. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was organized just as the Revolution was moving forward. The contradictory threads of racism and revolution seemed inextricably woven after the attempted assassination of an NAACP leader in Texas.

Christine Stansell has observed that Emma Goldman, "like most socialists and anarchists of the day . . . ignored the travails of African America: she never spoke a word about lynching, and the disfranchisement of black people under Jim Crow laws was an issue too bound up with what she viewed as an illegitimate electoral system to pique her interest."¹ However, this attitude was not shared by the "socialists and anarchists" involved in the NAACP in its early years. It certainly did not characterize John Shillady, the association leader targeted for assassination.

Furthermore, like Spain, Mexico was a major center for anarchism. Bartolomeo Vanzetti, the anarchist of Massachusetts fame, chose to live in Mexico from 1913 to 1917 to avoid conscription. Carlo Valdinoci was there too; he “accidentally blew himself up on June 2, 1919 while planting a bomb at the Washington, D.C. home of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer.” Mario Buda went to Mexico with Sacco and Vanzetti and “participated in the bomb conspiracy that followed. He was probably responsible for the Wall Street explosion of September 16, 1920.”² As border conflict increased during the summer of 1917, “a group of anarchists came into being whose function was to carry out bombings. . . . They had gone to Mexico to receive instruction in the use of explosives.”³ They continued to be activists while in Mexico and also had an influence across the border. Hubert Harrison, the “Father of Harlem Radicalism,” was “particularly influenced” by the work of the Spanish anarchist and educator Francisco Ferrer y Guardia—who lived in Jack Johnson’s favorite city, Barcelona; this “Hispanic” was murdered in 1909 after protesting Spanish despoilment of Morocco, North Africa.⁴

The Mexican anarchists’ and anarcho-syndicalists’ call for equality struck a chord among U.S. Negroes. There were warnings about a “society of colored anarchists.”⁵ In Lehigh, Oklahoma, followers of the Mexican revolutionary, Flores Magon, gathered in 1912; they included “American and Negro *companeros*” who “spoke in favor of the Revolution.”⁶ As the Negro population of southern California grew, so did anarchism. In the fall of 1912 President Taft complained that “there is not any doubt that the corner of the country is a basis for most of the anarchists and the Industrial World Workers [*sic*] and for all the lawless flotsam and jetsam [in] proximity to the Mexican border thrusts into those . . . cities.”⁷ The president may have had Calexico in mind, a well-known IWW stronghold.⁸

But the IWW was influential in other places too, not just in southern California. William Gleaves was a “British Negro” who infiltrated the “German Secret Service,” then “enrolled himself as a member of the IWW, which,” according to an insider, “at that time was working in close cooperation with the Germans. So ardent a discipline did he show himself that soon he was admitted to the inner councils.” As Gleaves recalled it, “I was assigned first to the duty of going up to the border where the American troops were stationed and I was to try to work up a revolt among some of the American soldiers. . . . I went from Mexico City to Juarez and crossed the border at El Paso and stayed in El Paso for a week or two.” He wound up in Nogales, Sonora, near the border, where he met “delegates of

the IWW from New Mexico, Arizona and California to arrange with them the plans whereby 'Hell would break loose with the United States.' . . . Of the four or five IWW delegates . . . two were to have been Negroes; and Gleaves was to give them their instructions." The plan called for an "uprising of the Negroes, strikes, the blowing up of mines, industrial plants, railroads, bridges and telegraph and telephone systems."⁹

Domestic radicalism aside, migrants and influence from Mexico were viewed widely as carriers of radicalism. Indeed, as a Tucson newspaper stated when Arizona and New Mexico were invited to join the Union in 1912, "the federal government wanted to stamp out western heresies before the ideas infected other states"—particularly from "people who worked with their hands," such as miners—and saw federal clamps as essential to that process.¹⁰

Texas was also influenced by radicalism. According to a San Antonio resident, "the Big Bend country is and has been a disgrace to the state for many years. It is infested by the worst gang of cutthroats ever turned loose, who live mainly by murder and robbery. . . . Red Flaggers, Social Revolutionaries, remnants of different bandit gangs coming up from the Laguna Country, has made this country almost uninhabitable."¹¹

One of these anarchist "leaders" was Joseph Labadie. He worked closely with John Shillady, soon to be a leader of the fledgling NAACP. This former "travelling salesman in millinery," was attracted to Labadie because of the latter's outspoken hatred of racism; "he was unusual in his frequency of association with blacks. . . . Labadie was devoid of bigotry."¹² Something similar could be said about Shillady—a Euro-American who almost gave his life in the quest for equality.

For his part, John Shillady was not hostile to the "state socialistic point of view."¹³ Nor was he hostile to anarchism: "Like all anarchists I have met," he said of one, this one "impressed me very favorably."¹⁴ In fact, "a philosophy based on principles such as individualistic anarchism is, offers a better solution than any other way I know."¹⁵ He read widely, including "Kropotkin, Tolstoi, Bakunin, Stirner, Tucker and Proudhon."¹⁶ From his home in Buffalo, New York, he wrote that "unfortunately anarchists here seem to be Russian, German, and other foreign born Jews, poor with little in their outward appearance to help their cause. They are communists—many of whom come to meetings smoking cigarettes, etc." He wished "they wouldn't but they do."¹⁷

He was critical of Christianity. "My scientific reading has made me acquainted with the lack of evidence for this astounding theory," referring

to the “miraculous birth of Jesus.”¹⁸ The “Roman Catholic Church today,” he said in 1903 “[is] as great a menace as she ever was—relatively speaking—she lacks the power only.” Of course, “as individuals she has many noble adherents—so has every autocratic state—the power is the thing.”¹⁹ He worked with trade unions at the highest level²⁰ and like any self-respecting radical of his era, always kept a “complete 3 vol. Edition of Tom Paine” nearby.²¹ He was a fan of Walt Whitman and worked diligently on a “series of lectures or addresses on the general theme ‘men the world have hated,’” including “Galileo, Copernicus, Tom Paine, etc.”²² Not only did he believe in “racial” equality but he thought that “economic equality” was the “basis of all other equalities and the goal of all progress toward democracy.”²³

Shillady very much wanted to hear the anarchist Emma Goldman in 1906, when she was “speaking for the Industrial Workers of the World.” There were “police there” but, unusually, “no interruption.” If he had been there, he would have done his part “protesting any denial of free speech.” As it was, she performed “splendidly.”²⁴ This was the man whose name was listed on NAACP stationery in 1918 directly beneath that of the esteemed Du Bois, a socialist of sorts himself, as “secretary.”²⁵

This cause of equality was adopted mostly by Euro-Americans on the margins of society, such as socialists and anarchists. They had to pay a high price for their radicalism. Lobbying in Texas, Shillady was beaten within an inch of his life. Evidently, some people got upset when he complained to the Governor of Texas in 1918 that “seventeen Negroes have now been lynched in Texas since June 1917. A lynching record exceeded by only one state in [the] Union during [the] same period.”²⁶ His colleague Walter White, a light-skinned Negro who barely escaped lynching himself on more than one occasion, found Shillady’s “deterioration . . . pitiful to watch. His great gaiety and warm smile disappeared. The superb efficiency which had been his was replaced by an indecisiveness as though he were paralyzed. As time went on he grew steadily worse instead of better and the Association’s work naturally suffered.”²⁷

Fueled by the polarized realities of Revolution in Mexico and racism in the South, Texas became the site for some of the most bitter struggles of the era—and some of the sweetest victories. Prior to 1918, the NAACP “had been completely unorganized” in Texas, but that year “twelve branches” were founded and a “further twenty-one in 1919. Within the space of one year the original membership of 2774 swelled up to 7962. In most of the new Texas NAACP branches, women made up at least a quar-

ter of the charter members." Shillady's beating was a direct response to this organizing, as "white leaders in the South applauded" his near-murder. The brutality was effective, as "in Texas the NAACP's explosive growth came to a sudden halt and then went into reverse."²⁸

In the fall of 1918, the NAACP leadership was informed that "the strongest branch is at San Antonio"—an epicenter of revolutionary influence—"which numbers nearly one thousand," but the good news soon changed to bad.²⁹ Simultaneously, Jack Johnson was being chased back to the United States after a violent regime change in Mexico City, and the Revolution's dynamic impact north of the border was coming to an end. Despite these setbacks, the NAACP was undergoing a remarkable spurt in growth nationally, spurred by the KKK's rise, the migration of Negroes from the Deep South, and the tumult fomented by war in Europe and the Revolution in Mexico. In 1916 the association had a mere 9,000 members. But by the end of 1918 there were 165 branches and 44,000 members, and by 1920 membership had grown to 62,000.³⁰ The attack on Shillady, one of the organization's key leaders, was designed to derail this growth.

Brutal racism in Texas combined with the revolutionary atmosphere bordering this state—and a proliferation of weapons—had made for a perilous atmosphere in the borderland. Shillady had been mauled in the shadow of the state capital in Austin; this was a setback to any hopes for democratic progress in the state. Meanwhile "rumors had become current . . . that Negroes were buying high powered rifles and ammunition and the officials asserted that investigations had shown a basis of fact for the rumors. It was feared by the authorities, so Mr. Shillady was informed, that there might be an 'armed uprising' among the Negroes."³¹

Even without an insurrection on the border there was plenty of violence against Texas Negroes. A typical example was the 1909 murder of a Negro porter in Brownsville by a police officer. Like so many blacks in the region, he was a railway worker, a porter from St. Paul, Minnesota, and had arrived in this dusty border town the very same day he was killed. As the officer recalled it, "I saw the Negro standing on the sidewalk of Bollack's store and as some ladies were coming that way, I said to him, 'Get off the bank.' He said, 'What?' I repeated, 'Get off the bank.' He did not obey the order and I said to him, 'Consider yourself under arrest.' At that he started to run and as he turned the corner on Elizabeth Street, he slipped and fell. As he was getting up, he threw his hands to his hip pocket. I thought that he was going to draw a gun and I pulled my gun and shot him. That is all

there is to it." The unfortunate porter was buried with "two bullet holes above the heart." Although the officer was convicted of a criminal offense he served only a few months of his sentence as the governor pardoned him.³² The casual violence of this chase was emblematic of the treatment of Negroes in the region even before their apparent sympathy for the Revolution caused "race relations" to deteriorate further.

As the second decade of the twentieth century proceeded, matters got a lot worse. In 1916, fifteen thousand Euro-Americans in Waco, Texas, celebrated the torture and burning of poor seventeen-year-old Jesse Washington. As the NAACP put it, they "unsexed him; cut off his fingers, nose and ears; and burned him alive. . . . The teeth brought five dollars each." In their pamphlet, "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness on Our Side of the Border," the association made a pointed and ironic reference to U.S. intervention in Mexico. This lynching was occurring, it said, as the "gal-lant" Buffalo Soldiers "were on their way to Carrizal" to face certain defeat on behalf of a white supremacist government.³³ Washington was not as fortunate as Henry Lowry, a black sharecropper in Arkansas who "shot and killed" a Euro-American landowner in a dispute, then "fled to Texas" and planned "to make it to Mexico."³⁴ This was the beginning of a major escalation of racist violence: "sixty blacks were lynched in 1918 and seventy-six in 1919 (the highest number since 1908)."³⁵ Black radicals ascribed this to the racists' response to the Negroes' willingness to challenge the system, inspired by Jack Johnson and revolutionary Mexico and the general environment of revolt that marked the era.

Incidents like these created the backdrop for the well-known Houston Mutiny of 1917. The battle-hardened Twenty-Fourth U.S. Infantry, stationed at Camp Logan, Texas, attacked whites in Houston after being subjected to bigotry. In a spate of rage the Negro troops defied their superiors, grabbed their weapons, and shot a soldier guarding the ammunition supply. And then in a maneuver that scared and scattered "Anglos," just as it excited and exhilarated many Negroes, they marched en masse on downtown Houston. Corporal Charles W. Baltimore, whose beating by a white policeman earlier in the day had helped to spark this rampage, led the contingent, bent on revenge. Opening fire on the police station, the soldiers killed five policemen and twelve other Euro-Americans, including a small girl who was killed by a stray bullet as she was sleeping. Punishment was sure, swift, and bloody. Nineteen soldiers were executed by hanging, a verdict that struck many in Black America as unfair; fifty received life terms.³⁶

Angry objections from many Negroes followed. A "letter signed by 'the spiritual descendants of John Brown' warned that there would be far more sabotage if additional black soldiers were executed for participation in the Houston mutiny." Washington nervously received news of an attempt to use the "funeral of Cpl. Larmon Brown, one of the men executed for participation in the Houston mutiny, to spread 'discontent' within [the city's] black community." Brown's mother was not "allow[ed to] mention . . . the 'unfortunate affair at Houston' at the funeral."³⁷

Du Bois was sober though unequivocal, recognizing that a turning point had been reached. "Here at last, at Houston is a change: here at last white folk died," he declared solemnly, "perhaps, as innocent as the thousands of Negroes done to death in the last two centuries. . . . They [the soldiers] were disciplined men who said—'this is enough; we'll stand no more.'"³⁸ Local Negro leaders had a more prosaic concern. Worried that retaliation lay in store, they "expressed particular concern that this crisis had led several employers to replace black laborers with Mexicans. . . . Even when the employment situation improved slightly and new jobs became available to blacks, they continued" to fret.³⁹

Others elsewhere in the country were fretting too. G.W. Bouldin, editor of the *San Antonio Inquirer*, published—but did not himself write—words critical of the court martial of the mutineers. For so doing he "faced a two year ordeal of indictments, arrests, trials and appeals before finally being incarcerated in the federal penitentiary at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas." The author of the article, Clara L. Threadgill-Dennis, had written encouragingly to the mutineers, saying, "Be brave, don't feel discouraged, rest assured that every woman in all this land of ours, who dares feel proud of the Negro blood that courses through her veins, reveres you, she honors you."⁴⁰ One reason why the reaction to these words was so draconian was that according to U.S. military intelligence, "men of the 24th Infantry, now stationed at Camp Furlong, New Mexico had said that if the Houston Mutineers were convicted by court martial, they would wreck nearby Columbus, seize machine guns, and join Pancho Villa in Mexico."⁴¹

Even moderate Negroes could sense which way the wind was blowing. Booker T. Washington's successor, R. R. Moton, told Washington's former aide Emmett Scott that the "general talk among the ordinary Negro is that the Government lynched those soldiers," that is, the mutineers. "The feeling is very strong," he warned, "and I have gotten it from a great many different sections and angles. Suppressed emotion is, in some ways, more dangerous than otherwise."⁴²

The repercussions of this revolt were still reverberating through the nation decades later in a manner not unlike what “Nat Turner’s rebellion had inflicted upon pre–Civil War southern society. The War Department had to overhaul its plans and avoid large concentrations of black combat troops. Military leaders also became concerned about the loyalty of American blacks in the aftermath of the hangings. . . . The distrust of blacks lingered beyond World War I and self-proclaimed patriots, like the members of the newly constituted Ku Klux Klan would cite complaints in the black press of the wartime treatment of black soldiers as proof of disloyalty. As late as 1940 during mobilization for a second world conflict, racists were still citing the mutiny at Houston warning against the malicious provocations of black activists.”⁴³

In the near term, the mutiny caused many to question the feasibility of arming Negroes, who had good reason to be disgruntled. But what was the alternative? In 1918 a San Antonio newspaper called *Harpoon*—whose slogan was “minnows are safe, I am out after whales”—published an article entitled, “Why I object to Negro soldiers.” Why indeed? The writer said they “do not possess that spirit of obedience to their superiors, which is the first requisite of a first class soldier. . . . Americans unfortunately are well acquainted with this Negro characteristic of running amuck when least expected—as thousands of white people in Brownsville, Houston and many other localities in this country can sadly attest.”⁴⁴

As some had feared, the Houston Mutiny led to a wave of retaliatory violence in Texas and the immediate vicinity. Negro soldiers writing from Columbus, New Mexico, where the aftereffects of Pancho Villa’s devastating raid were still being felt, told Du Bois bluntly, “We are in a terrible plight and need some assistance. . . . The men are in a very bad mood.” Surveillance and harassment had surged to the point where one trooper said nervously, “I am not sure that you will get this letter as they are opening mail.”⁴⁵ Reporting from Houston, James Weldon Johnson, field secretary of the NAACP, informed the leadership that it was the proliferation of police brutality that had ignited the Mutiny. “The white police are said to have been habitually brutal in their treatment of colored prisoners, usually striking and cursing them when making arrests.” As “a concession to the southern feeling about armed Negroes . . . the Negro military police were not armed. The colored people I have spoken to here say this was the first time in the history of military police that this has happened.”⁴⁶

The NAACP, still a relatively small organization, found its resources strained to the limit. “Negroes [were] arming against lynch rule in

Texas,”⁴⁷ the *New York Telegram* reported, though they were rapidly being overwhelmed. Instead of things quieting down, Shillady’s beating seemed to produce more violence. In Center, Texas, a “mob of more than one thousand men this afternoon stormed the county jail” and “battered down the steel doors, wrecked the steel cell and took out Lige Daniels, Negro, charged with the murder of a white woman, and hanged him to a limb of an old tree.” He was only seventeen years old.⁴⁸

Nerves were on edge and it took little to provoke murder. In Texarkana, a “quarrel over a drinking cup between a white street paving foreman and a Negro employee” led to the battering of the latter.⁴⁹ How could Negroes be required to give their lives for intervention in Mexico and war in Europe when their lives could not be protected by their very own government? In a futile gesture, the NAACP protested the lynching of Sara Cabiness and her five sons in Huntsville, Texas, and “the fatal wounding of her daughter . . . at a time when 157,000 Negroes are offering their lives for the preservation of the ideals of democracy.”⁵⁰

How long would “157,000 Negroes” willingly give up their lives on behalf of a state that not only failed to protect their lives and those of their families but actively endorsed their slaughter? How long could this continue when agents of Mexico and their global allies, not to mention prominent figures like Jack Johnson, were spreading the powerful message among Negroes that they had an alternative, they could “flip the script,” and put the pressure on their antagonists?

The “antagonists” were not listening. The sheriff of Red River County told Governor Hobby of Texas in early 1918 that he was “having some trouble here with [a] few white men in [the] north part of [the] county trying to run Negroes out of that section which covers about ten miles square.” Already they had “burned [a] Negro church” and “should they succeed [further it was possible] four thousand people [would be left] without land to work and approximately five thousand acres idle.”⁵¹ Months later a disturbing report from the Texas Rangers in Longview, Texas, said that “some few weeks ago a Negro had been arrested by the sheriff of that county for insulting a white woman.” A black newspaper, the *Chicago Defender*, had published an article “considered scurrilous by the white people.” “They suspicioned [*sic*] that Professor Jones, a Negro educator, was the author of the article,” so “two brothers” of the aggrieved woman gave Jones a “serious beating,” leading to another fight. “Four white men were wounded,” then a group of whites decided to “burn the residences of Jones” and those suspected of having ties to him. They also

“burned a Negro hall,” beat “an old Negro woman eighty years of age,” and “very severely beat a Negro merchant.” As was typical, the white supremacists were outraged by what they perceived as insolence on the part of Negroes whose profile did not match the downtrodden stereotype.⁵²

Actually, the Rangers’ report did not provide the true flavor of what had occurred. According to the *New York Commoner*, a mob lynched an “innocent [Negro] man” after a “wealthy” white woman said she loved him; “the colored people . . . are leaving by every means possible, abandoning farms and wealth to seek safety.”⁵³ The authorities were desperately seeking the subversive professor. The local sheriff—whose devoted interest in the Negro was apparent from his subscription to the NAACP’s journal—also “ordered a dozen sawed off pump shot guns for his office,” just in case he encountered any Negroes who were interested in matters beyond the finer points of Du Bois’s elegant prose.⁵⁴

However, Negroes had other remedies beyond flight. Their state, Texas, bordered an active political volcano in Mexico, which was awash in weapons. And, of course, there were plenty of armed Negro soldiers. The Texas Ranger Frank Matthews was told by “Mr. Davis, salesman at George Petchernick’s Gun Store on East Houston St.” in San Antonio that “they had sold a great many Negroes pistols and rifles and cartridges . . . in the last two months. . . . Several pawn shops had sold a great deal of arms and ammunition to Negroes.” Matthews reported that “the manager (a Jew) of the Sun Set Loan Co. stated to me that a San Antonio Negro man came in his place of business after he had been notified not to sell any more guns to Negroes and wanted to buy three of the best rifles he had and wanted rifles that he could get plenty of cartridges for and he turned him down and would not sell [to] him.”⁵⁵

This regional arms race was not limited to San Antonio. In Marshall, Texas, a “great deal of arms and ammunition” were “bought” by “Negroes from local merchants and . . . shipped in by Express and Parcel Post Mail.” Negroes had been “stopped from selling radical Negro papers on the streets” and “several Negro papers coming” to the county “by subscription through the mails” had been seized in an attempt to blunt the proliferating Negro radicalism. The “Post Master” had been enlisted. He was “watching for” the Rangers and “would not let them [the newspapers] be delivered.” Undaunted, “Negroes” continued “holding secret meetings” but the authorities “had not been able to locate them.” Stores had been “notified not to sell any guns or ammunition to Negroes.” This order assumed urgency because there had been “20 calls for high power rifles by Negroes re-

cently,” which may have come from a “an organization of about 700 Negroes a few miles northeast of Marshall.”⁵⁶

The intrepid Matthews traveled to Dallas where he picked up a copy of the NAACP’s journal, the contents of which worried him. He did not seem as concerned about the fact that the “whites [were] all armed” and “were prepared to take care of Dallas and the Negroes.” The latter were not wholly vulnerable since “a great deal of guns and ammunition” were “brought here by Negroes before the merchants were notified not to sell any more to them.” But “a great many Negroes were taking high power rifles out of pawn.” He ordered “Sears & Roebuck . . . to not ship any more” weapons after they had “shipped two rifles to Houston.” He spoke to the mayor of Dallas, “Frank W. Wozencraft,” who “said the Negro paper the ‘Dallas Express’ . . . two weeks ago had some very bad Negro write ups in it, and he went to the editor and told him that he must cut out such articles or that it would cause all the Negroes to get killed.” A voracious reader, the mayor added that “the Houston and Galveston [Negro] papers were very bad.”⁵⁷ Indeed, in Galveston—Jack Johnson’s hometown—there was, according to one source, “a class of Negroes more insolent and defiant than in any other place in Texas.”⁵⁸

The recollections of the Texas Rangers were consistent with those of the Washington-based Bureau of Investigation. In Wharton, Texas, they uncovered “unusual calls at the store for the purchase of high powered revolvers and rifle ammunition on the part of Negroes.”⁵⁹ They worried that the “Mexican situation may appeal to [the] radical element among Negroes . . . [and sought to] ascertain if about six Negroes speaking some Spanish [were] available for undercover work[,] particularly border points.” “Efforts [were] being made by this office to locate the required number of Spanish speaking Negroes.”⁶⁰

Why this might be necessary was revealed when it was discovered that there were “secret meetings among the Negroes in Houston. . . . It is stated [that] both Negro and Mexican speakers are disseminating anti-American and anti-white propaganda. The Negroes are being told that trouble is about to arise between Mexico and the United States, and that the Mexicans are better friends to the Negroes than the Americans and that, therefore, the Negroes should join forces with the Mexicans in the conflict.”⁶¹

Waco was still coping with the effects of the lynching of the teenager Jesse Washington a few years earlier. But in 1919, as Jack Johnson was publicizing his powerful messages across the border, the Texas Rangers were

grumbling about other messages emanating from the north in the pages of the *Chicago Defender*. A “Negro drugstore [was] selling” this paper despite warnings to stop doing so. “The most prominent Negroes” were warned “and told . . . that if anything started, that they would hunt them up first.” African Americans were not sitting idly by in the face of this eventuality. As a local storekeeper in Waco told the authorities, “he had sold a great deal of rifle and pistol cartridges to Negroes lately, he said that one Negro bought three boxes of 30-30” and “he had wanted more.”⁶²

A battalion of intelligence agents and informants were busy filing reports in Texas. There was concern about a “Negro uprising in East Texas in opposition to the draft.”⁶³ An agent in Texarkana heard a “Negro preacher [say] . . . ‘Negroes should arm themselves with Winchester rifles . . . then we will have another war right here at home for Democracy.’”⁶⁴

As temperatures were rising, so were tempers.

Though the NAACP has been derided as a hopeless creature of “the most prominent Negroes,” this characterization misses the mark on more than one score, not least because it became a target for those in the grip of hysteria. First of all, this characterization was not altogether accurate. Second, even if it were, that did not mean that the association had escaped the line of fire—to the contrary. Third, the organization’s militant plans embraced the entire Negro community as their antagonists well knew, since they were among the more reliable readers of NAACP publications. As early as 1913 the group had called for the formation of a “vigilance committee.” This was an avowed “call to arms . . . to protect the colored people in their several communities from aggression.” They wanted to “federate local vigilance committees among colored people in every community in the United States.”⁶⁵

Negroes in Texas were moving in that direction already, especially since their need to do so was more urgent than most. Indeed, given the virulence of the violence they faced and their proximity to the conflict in Mexico, Negroes in the borderlands were in the vanguard of armed resistance to white supremacy. The southwest authorities who perused the NAACP journal were disturbed by the unabashed defense in these pages of the Houston mutineers and the fact that about the same time the revolt was launched, Negro soldiers in the strategic post of Columbus, New Mexico—recently ravaged by Pancho Villa—had formed a relief committee for the victims of racist violence in East St. Louis and elsewhere. They wrote, “*The Crisis* is held in very high esteem by the men of the 24th Infantry and we are always glad when it comes. . . . We want to become

members of the NAACP." The group that signed this letter included George A. Singleton as chair, Thomas E. Davis as secretary, and Vida Henry as treasurer.⁶⁶ The Columbus Negroes' training in firearms would have greatly strengthened the "vigilance committees."

The danger presented by such efforts was so great that they were repressed forcefully in the borderlands. Thus, as Jack Johnson was disappearing into a prison cell, a "confidential" agent was reporting that "practically no radicalism exists among the Negroes [in the borderlands]. . . . Reports during the latter part of November 1920 that Negroes were arming themselves proved to be without foundation." A few pockets of antigovernment activity continued, as "in the early part of November 1920 a letter written by Maxime Alcocer, Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, to his brother, Catarino Alcocer, San Antonio, was intercepted. In it Maximo urged Catarino to propagandize for Bolshevism among Negroes, adding 'my beloved Negroes are those whom we need in our party as they are the most humiliated. They should be most brave.'" ⁶⁷ The government feared that Black and Brown were purportedly fusing with Red, as "Bolshevists are now planning an active propaganda among the Negroes in America" that "will come through the Mexican border." ⁶⁸ William F. Buckley, Sr., whose roots were in San Diego, Texas—site of the planned massacre of white men in 1916—was informed that "Bolshevism in this country came from Mexico. You will have to eradicate it from Mexico before you will be able to fight it successfully here." ⁶⁹

Although Texas was the trouble spot in the borderlands, the example of Columbus, New Mexico, demonstrated that the effects of the deteriorating situation in the Lone Star state were felt throughout the region. In response, blacks began to emigrate to Mexico once more rather than endure lynch laws and repression. During the revolutionary era a large number of African Americans migrated from New Orleans to Tampico, Mexico, as the oil industry boomed. There they founded branches of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. In Baja California, "in the Vallecitos and Santa Clara Valleys that lie between Tecate and Ensenada," about thirty miles south of San Diego, a Negro colony was founded at this time. "Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Key" of Okmulgee, Oklahoma, were "millionaire landholders thanks to profits from oil," but "despite their wealth, [they were] disgusted with the racism of the U.S." Their wealth made them prominent targets of attacks by racists. The colony they backed, which included fifty families and supported itself by means of fruit orchards and cattle grazing, lasted until the 1960s. ⁷⁰

Negroes were reporting favorably about their experience in Mexico during the revolutionary era. One of the oil workers who came to Tampico “explained that production was declining and [thus] he could not advise others from the [United States] to join him, but it had been a good place to work because ‘there is no race prejudice; everyone is treated according to his abilities.’” Another black emigrant “noted that the Mexicans did not use the word nigger. And in addition to respite from that pejorative, Mexico offered the amusement of listening to the Mexicans call the white bosses ‘gringo,’ which was ‘the same thing’ in amount of respect for the person so labeled.”⁷¹

The U.S. authorities became quite concerned that such colonies could become bases of subversion undermining U.S. security on the border and providing a further refuge for those wishing to avoid conscription. In fact, “in early 1918”—as the burden of war in Europe was adding to their concerns in Mexico—the authorities made contact with a “Baja colonization project” for fear of this territory becoming a magnet for draft evaders. “Meanwhile, Manuel Aguirre Berlanga, the Mexican Minister of the Interior, issued an official statement on 21 June 1919 that encouraged colonization of Mexico by foreigners.” His words were echoed by Juan Uribe, a leading Mexican official, who arrived in Los Angeles in September 1919. “My only regret,” he exclaimed, “is that it is not physically possible to immediately transport several millions of [African Americans] to my beloved Mexico, where the north yields her riches as nowhere else and where people are not disturbed by artificial standards of race or color.” In response, the Negro Theodore Troy proclaimed, “I am going to a land where freedom and opportunity beckon me as well as every other man, woman and child of dark skin. In this land there are no Jim Crow laws to fetter me; I am not denied opportunity because of the color of my skin and wonderful undeveloped resources of a country smiled upon by God beckon my genius on to their development.” Hugh Macbeth, a leader of the Baja project, said “it is not beyond the range of possibility that a Negro state may be established in Lower California. It might be possible to create a state with [a population of] 20,000 . . . in the course of a decade or so.”⁷²

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that “a tract of land embracing 21,800 acres has been purchased by a syndicate of local Negro business men. This land is held by the Lower California Mexican Land & Development Company, of which Theodore W. Troy is president. [Hugh] Macbeth is secretary.”⁷³ They were offering a “real solution to the future progress of [our] people.” The land was being offered on friendly terms: a “minimum

tract will be five acres," at \$20 per acre, whereas the "same land" in southern California was up to fifteen times as much. The land being offered was only fifty-five miles from San Diego and thirty-seven miles from Ensenada in Baja California. "This is the chance" for the embattled soul "who wants to be really free!"⁷⁴

But the project faced stiff competition. The Calxico Investment Company, another black emigration scheme, offered "marvelous opportunities in Lower California" (although its slogan, "Sambo Wakes Up," was distasteful). Seeking to reassure those who might think that its project might have something to do with the militant emigrationism of Jack Johnson, the Calxico Investment Company noted that its offer "has been extensively reproduced in the white papers" and "they too seem to share in our views."⁷⁵

Pardon the expression, but there was a "darker side" to black emigration. "It is not our purpose," said Macbeth, "to establish this colony as a retreat for poverty-stricken Negroes."⁷⁶ Wealthy Negroes, who were subjected to treatment similar to that endured by poor Negroes, wanted to escape both from the United States and from their less affluent brethren. Macbeth and his comrades pledged to lobby Washington on behalf of the post-Carranza regime in Mexico City "in return for . . . Mexican hospitality," but their offer may not have been welcome to a government that allowed Jack Johnson to be returned to the United States and that wanted to distance itself from possible Negro subversion.⁷⁷ The class background of the migrating Negroes may have been reassuring in that regard.

As with William Ellis decades earlier, the Negro elites who were in the forefront of the emigration movement pursued this project in a clumsy fashion. In the summer of 1916, as newspaper headlines announced Villa's Columbus raid, the related U.S. invasion of Mexico, and the Plan of San Diego, the Progressive Education Association embarked on yet another Negro colonization plan. This time the targeted territory was a "tract of land in . . . Arizona," part of the "Gadson [*sic*] Purchase," and it consisted of "about . . . one hundred thousand acres." It was reported that the "company proposes to build an empire for Afro-Americans over which a Black president shall reign and all officials shall be Black people." This was consistent with the emerging climate of opinion symbolized by Marcus Garvey.⁷⁸ But of all the land they could have selected in the western hemisphere, with grand insensitivity they chose the "land of the Papago Indians in Southern Arizona" as "the future home of the race."⁷⁹

The Buffalo Soldiers, about to be deployed on a “fool’s errand” in Mexico, were completing mopping up operations against Native Americans along the border just then. This was not the Negroes’ finest hour in North America; moreover, it showed how easily the idealistic idea of migration could be hijacked for less than honorable purposes. The leaders of the project felt compelled to state that “previous to our going to the land there was a question mark in our minds as to what sort of reception we would get from the Indians, whether they would be friendly or hostile.” To their relief, “we were received with open arms,” perhaps because the indigenous people “are civilized far beyond expectation.”⁸⁰ That this optimism was premature became clear when a land dispute erupted between the would-be colonizers and the Papago.⁸¹ Furthermore, the comment by Senator Ben Tillman, a white supremacist, urging “that the new territories” accruing to the United States “be used as a racial safety valve to decrease lynchings by deporting troublesome blacks,” suggested that black colonization movements were subject to manipulation.⁸²

But the mood among Negroes was defiant. Despite the organized massacres of Texas, African Americans were not cowed, perhaps sustained by the encouragement provided by Mexico and its allies in Berlin and Tokyo. This was particularly so of the black press, which was generally in tune with the shifting moods of its readers. Hence, the Texas Rangers treated the *Chicago Defender* and *The Crisis* as if they were Negro versions of *Das Kapital*.

The U.S. authorities, despite their pronounced distaste for the Negro, were unsure about the actual scope and importance of emigration. In July 1922, in an intelligence report from San Antonio, the U.S. agent, Gus Jones, cited Mexican sources that “fifteen million Negroes from the United States desire to immigrate to Mexico and form large colonies and industrial centers. . . . This will double the population of the Republic in one stroke. . . . When our reporter called yesterday at the Presidency [in Mexico] he found in the ante-chamber of the President, some fifty Negroes, correctly dressed.” One of the would-be immigrants, J. B. Rice claimed, “Amongst the Negroes desirous of coming to Mexico as colonists there are many millionaires, professionals, land owners, expert oil men and all are men who have dedicated their lives to honest work.” E. B. Kay, another would-be immigrant “representing a large delegation of Negroes who of late arrived in the capital . . . has been in daily conference with President Obregon . . . [who reputedly] favored the project.” But another Mexican official was heard to say that he opposed Negro immigrants in favor of “European immigrants,” and especially “Mennonites,” who “have

proven already their value as colonists in the state of Chihuahua and Durango and many thousands continue to arrive from Canada.”⁸³ As events unfolded, it appeared that the second group had triumphed in Mexico City after Carranza was deposed.

Another “confidential” intelligence report revealed “plans said to be . . . [a]foot for the establishment of a Negro state to be situated partly within the boundaries of Mexico,” devised by “M. M. Madden, a Negro attorney in Oklahoma City.” This “fantastic scheme” was “presented to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs” and a “special sub-committee has been appointed in the House to investigate” its feasibility. The idea was “for the acquisition of a tract of land 500 miles square in Mexico, bordering the Rio Grande and the Gulf of Mexico.” This “independent nation” was designed to have the “same relation to the United States that Canada does to Great Britain. . . . Negotiations with favorable prospects are said to be under way with the Carranza Government.”⁸⁴ This was the dilemma for the United States: whether a Negro colony was to be viewed as a groundwork for sedition, intended to undermine Washington, or as a puppet of the United States, and little more than a precursor of a “bantustan.”

In any case, this “fantastic scheme” died. But the organs that propagated radical ideas did not go away as easily. *The Messenger*, published by the then militant socialists Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph, and *The Crusader*, also published by Marxists (and nascent communists) such as the West Indian Cyril Briggs, often outflanked *The Crisis* and the *Chicago Defender* on the left. Though dominated by Randolph and Owen, *The Messenger* included the conservative George Schuyler, the leading economist Abram Harris, the noted journalist and historian J. A. Rogers, the leading writer Alice Dunbar Nelson, and a future editor of *The Crisis*, James Ivy.⁸⁵ Its subscribers included the affluent A’Leila Walker, the publisher of the *Defender*, Robert S. Abbott, the South African freedom fighter Clements Kadalie, NAACP operative William Pickens, the millionaire baron of black Memphis politics, R. R. Church, the writer Charles Chesnutt, the leading sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, and even the disciple of Booker T. Washington, R. R. Moton.⁸⁶ Like Jack Johnson, *The Messenger* was a big supporter of Carranza, the Mexican leader, who “planned to take over public utilities and to operate them for the people.” He was lauded in their first issue in November 1917, as the October Revolution seemed to be giving Marxism a new birth of freedom, as “a firm and intelligent man in the saddle. . . . All Hail Carranza!”⁸⁷

At the same time, *The Messenger* assailed the “American oil owners, copper mine investors and ranch owners” who were raising questions about Carranza and encouraged the dispatch of Negro troops to Mexico to protect their lives and property. As for the United States, it asked what was being done about “Negroes [who] are lynched and burned at the stake every three days.” In contrast, “Mexico’s laws severely punish anyone for discrimination on account of race or color.” They repeated the familiar story of how Jack Johnson had desegregated Sanborn’s restaurant at gunpoint in Mexico City and his message that “this isn’t Texas but Mexico.” Warming to the task, *The Messenger* proclaimed, “Mexico has had the most advanced legal and social codes of any country in the world since the days of Juarez. . . . Race prejudice does not have sway in Mexico today, but it will have sway as soon as Americans can get control there. . . . Intelligent and class conscious Negroes everywhere must fight for justice and fair play for the Mexican people. The air is freer there for men and women of color than any state in the United States.”⁸⁸

The Messenger was alarmed that that the United States “coveted Mexican oil and resented Mexico’s ultra-democratic constitution,” and “warned African-Americans that shedding their blood in a war against Mexico would only spread white supremacy.” “With America’s entrance into Mexico,” it advised, “will also go its chief attribute, race prejudice, just as the American government had exported white racism to France.”⁸⁹

As World War I came to an end *The Messenger* stepped up its rhetoric. Why, it asked, should the “workers of America . . . be sent to slaughter the workers of Mexico in order to rescue the precious fluid [oil] from the impious hands of the [Mexicans] and place it in the Christianly [*sic*] hands of the American capitalists, who have just finished their crusade to ‘make the world safe for democracy.’ Of course, it is not nice to remind world opinion of the fact that Washington, D.C., the Capital of the Nation, is not safe for Negroes.”⁹⁰ Like a mantra, this theme was repeated: why should Negroes subvert Mexico on behalf of the white-supremacist United States? To many, this proposition made no sense at all. Mexico “has far more law and order than has Oklahoma, Georgia or Texas. She certainly has not burned any human beings alive. . . . We have yet to hear of Mexican Jim-Crowing or disfranchising her citizens on account of race or color.”⁹¹

But by the later summer of 1920 Carranza had been deposed, Jack Johnson had been extradited, and *The Messenger* was betraying signs of the turn away from the left that would characterize a good deal of Randolph’s sub-

sequent career. "Mexico will soon become our second Haiti," occupied and administered by the United States. "No power can save Mexico from American capitalism, except the American workers, and they are too backward and reactionary" to do so, it said glumly.⁹²

The Crusader was more belligerent than its competitor. Its spokesperson was Cyril Briggs. Born in 1888 "in the little island of Nevis" in the Caribbean, like many of Mexican origin in the United States he too was an immigrant, having arrived in 1905.⁹³ The "plutes" or plutocrats "are plotting war against Mexico," he wrote, "Mexico the colored republic to the South. Mexico that does not Jim Crow Negroes nor lynch them; Mexico that does not declare pogroms against Negroes but only welcomes them as it has welcomed Jack Johnson and many other Negroes seeking freedom from persecution."⁹⁴ Mexico, it was reported in what was seen as the ultimate compliment, "may prove to be 'the Soviet Russia of America.'"⁹⁵

Such bright-eyed optimism suffered a setback, then collapsed after Jack Johnson was repatriated to the United States and his patrons in Mexico lost influence. But it left a deep imprint on the borderlands. The black population of many states of the Old Confederacy declined during this era. The decline in Texas was breathtaking. "By 1918, more than 100,000 African-Americans had left Texas for northern cities. Austin"—where NAACP leader John Shillady had been beaten—"lost over one-third of its black population within three years. . . . Blacks in border towns like Laredo, where the population had dropped from 205 to 41 between 1900 and 1920" were typical of the trend. On the other hand, in El Paso—a frontline city during the Revolution, ringed by a circle of armed Negro troopers—the "black community more than doubled in size during this time."⁹⁶ Texas Negroes beyond the furthest reaches of West Texas had to pay a severe price for the fact that the borderlands were dependent upon—and simultaneously conflicted about—a paradoxical symbol of authority, the rifle-wielding Negro troopers.

Not all the people leaving the South were going to the north and west. Some were heading further south. Such was the case of one "Sr. Stuart," a "citizen . . . of color . . . Anglo-American [*sic*]." He had contacted the Mexican Consul in New York about emigration but the diplomat sought to avoid endangering his life by including sensitive information in correspondence. This was a reflection, said the Consul, of the "sad situation of the people of his race," the "disgrace" of the "Negro race in this country."⁹⁷

CHAPTER 5

Buffaloed Soldiers

“Like many American Indians,” said the New Mexico writer, Tim Giago, in 1997, “I find it hard to understand how a racial minority of black Americans could allow themselves to become mercenaries for the U.S. government.” He was referring to the “Buffalo Soldiers,” the segregated Negro troops who did Washington’s bidding in their confrontations with Native Americans and Mexicans. It is easy, of course, to rationalize their actions. Did they have a choice? it is asked. How could they realistically dissent from the national consensus, given their own precarious citizenship status? But Native Americans whose ancestors were killed by these men are less forgiving. Says Giago, “I believe African Americans everywhere should look upon this time in their history with extreme caution. Many American Indian men, women and children were mercilessly slaughtered by these Buffalo Soldiers who were led by white officers. . . . This is not one of the prouder moments for African Americans.” Of course, “to the credit of some, they deserted and joined some of the American Indian tribes they had been hired to annihilate,” and maybe they were kinder and gentler than others might have been (though the idea of a “benevolent” oppressor is rejected by most African Americans).¹

A correspondent for the *Baltimore Sun* relates an experience in which he was approached by an Indian woman. “‘Buffalo Soldier.’ She spat out



The African American soldiers pictured here were among those who played a pivotal role in the U.S. military as the Revolution in Mexico got under way. Courtesy Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

the words and slapped her steering wheel. 'Buffalo Soldiers and the white man killed my people. My ancestors are up there! And I don't appreciate you being here. Why don't you go look at Abraham Lincoln's grave!'" Cornel Pewewardy, also a Native American, agrees with the gathering consensus. "From an uncritical Afrocentric perspective," he says, "the Buffalo Soldiers may seem glorious and honorable, but from an indigenous, tribal-centered perspective, the Buffalo Soldiers do not deserve to be glorified as warriors." Why? Because "many Indians know the horrid stories about being forced off their land or killed" by these soldiers of a government that despised them and their victims.²

The Native Americans' bitterness is understandable. The Negro troopers took pride in the fact that they had "battled and defeated the Apaches, Kiowas, Comanches, Cheyennes, Mexicans and Mescaleros."³ With an apparent unwitting conceit in the magnitude of the horrors they helped to perpetrate, a "small group" of these "scouts and selected troopers relentless[ly] tracked and pursued" the valiant Geronimo. "The campaign against Geronimo took 16 months."⁴

To imagine a different course of action for Negro soldiers, one must imagine a different course for U.S. history and reject a teleological outcome that believes that what is had to be. For example, Mexico's existence helped to provide leverage against Washington for Negroes, just as the Cold War—or the existence of a socialist camp⁵—helped to drive civil rights reform. Likewise, strong and sovereign Native American nations, as the example of the Seminoles briefly demonstrated, could have been powerful allies of African Americans.

There is a growing consensus that the settlement of the Great Plains by nonindigenous peoples was, in the words of Nicholas D. Kristof, the well-known *New York Times* columnist, "one of America's greatest mistakes, a 140 year old scheme that has failed at a cost of trillions of dollars, countless lives and immeasurable heartbreak. . . . The plains, which have overtaken places like Appalachia to become by far the poorest part of the country, represent a monumental failure in American history." He avers that "we may look back on large-scale settlement of the Plains as a fluke, a temporary domination now receding again." Implicitly, Kristof challenges the role of the Buffalo Soldiers in helping to subdue this "vast region in the middle of America, more than five times the size of California."⁶

Although the "arrival of [Negro] troops was viewed with apprehension by local white civilians," their perspective often changed quickly. In Crawford, Nebraska, in the heart of the Great Plains, Anglo residents were

“elated over the arrival of the [Buffalo Soldiers] anticipating economic benefit,” and instant relief from the assaults of their indigenous foes.⁷ However, the Buffalo Soldiers were “treated shabbily by the government” and “harassed by the settlers they were sent to protect.” “The greatest respect they received came from their battlefield enemies,” the Native Americans. But should we celebrate these soldiers’ grit and forbearance—or wonder about their tactical and strategic judgment? Although the fact that some—not all—Native American groups were slave owners complicated the ability of some Negroes to view all Indians as allies, it did reinforce their need for a keen tactical and strategic sense.

The 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry—called Buffalo Soldiers supposedly because their frizzy hair resembled the animal’s coat—consisted of freed slaves, young workers, farmers, and others who needed a job. They were garrisoned at the most “desolate posts, issued shoddy equipment, worn-out horses and rations of black coffee and bad meat.” By one estimate, they “comprised 20 percent of America’s Indian fighting cavalry” and “boasted the lowest desertion rate,” which predisposed commanders to toss them into battle.⁸ For example, S. L. A. Marshall, the military expert from El Paso, recalled that “deserter figures . . . in the Indian wars . . . [were] as high as 50%.” Only the brave—or those with few opportunities—refused to flee when the indigenous people defended the only homes they knew.⁹ One commentator suggested in 1899 that in light of the “alarming increase in army desertions . . . the remedy was to ‘enlist none but colored men.’ Desertions in white regiments were triple those in Negro outfits.” Negroes were contrasted favorably to the “insubordinate and characterless class of the foreign and low-born part of the population assigned to white regiments.”¹⁰

The \$13 per month salary “was as good as a Negro man could expect.” They were abused and shunned: the 9th was the regiment that even the doomed George Custer rejected.¹¹ They were in the military precisely because of the dearth of opportunity elsewhere and because others were reluctant to take on the dangerous work involved. Theirs was a “dirty, lower-class job” and “recruits were considered the dregs of society: displaced industrial workers, uprooted peasants, even criminals on the run who lived under aliases.” The “post–Civil War desertion rate” was “higher than at any time in American history. More than fourteen thousand men deserted in 1867, more than a quarter of the army’s total strength. In 1871 desertions climbed to over 30 percent following a reduction in enlisted men’s strength.” This depletion in the ranks at a moment when the Native

Americans had yet to be subdued only increased the importance of Negro troopers.

Interestingly, “in contrast to the low desertion rates of [blacks in] the Indian wars and the Mexican border conflicts, African Americans who served in the Philippines Islands deserted more than the whites, with some deserters even joining the insurrectionists against the U.S. army.”¹² Perhaps the distance from the United States was a factor in this process, as it was easier to find a secure refuge from Washington in the Pacific. Or perhaps Negroes were loath to promote U.S. imperialism abroad but were willing to help build the U.S. nation.

Unfortunately, Native Americans were not the only ones who disliked these Negro troops.¹³ When labor unrest erupted in Bisbee, Arizona, and miners were “deported” en masse to New Mexico, the “prisoners” were guarded by “black soldiers.”¹⁴ When “Mexicans and Tejanos . . . began to riot” in El Paso in the late nineteenth century, “looting homes and villages with cries of ‘kill all Americans’ and ‘death to the gringos,’” it was Buffalo Soldiers who helped restore law and order. They were essential in “suppressing violence instigated by American citizens of Hispanic descent” and just as important in raising tensions between Negroes and Mexicans—a relationship that theretofore had been quite friendly.

However, this was only part of a complex picture. Historically the “first Anglo settlers to Texas” had feared a “multiracial coalition of blacks, Indians and Mexicans,” and this “remained a continuing source of anxiety though the post-Civil War years.” As “the conquest of the Rio Grande reached its final stage, policymakers noticed a change of demeanor in black servicemen, who refused to capitulate to racial discrimination; the same weapons that had opened the frontier to settlement could just as easily be turned on racist whites.” As early as 1883, Negroes in Harrison County, Texas, “attempted to organize their own militia and protect themselves from racial violence. Local whites, with the help of state forces, crushed the movement, but rumors about armed, uniformed blacks provoked paranoiac fears that lasted for months.”¹⁵

Nonetheless, some contemporary Negro observers were both struck and outraged by the role played by the Buffalo Soldiers. Hubert Harrison, an immigrant from the Virgin Islands who set up shop in Harlem, recalled with wonderment that “when plots were rife and explosions and murders” were rocking Washington, President Woodrow Wilson “put a guard around the White House made up of *Negro soldiers*” (emphasis in original). “Down at Camp Upton on Long Island, when our armies were being

mobilized, every white person who sought admission to the camp was stopped by the sentry, questioned and searched. The only Negroes who were stopped and questioned were those who at first sight seemed white. All of which has a meaning.”¹⁶

Harrison was not the only person who was struck by the incongruous sight of Negroes being a chief guardian of their oppressors. It was another Negro of Caribbean origin, W. A. Domingo, who said that African Americans were “presently ‘the most benighted section of the American proletariat’ and ‘the most pathological Americans.’ They had fought for the Confederacy [*sic*], against their racial compatriot Aguinaldo during the U.S. subjugation of the Philippines, and for the United States during World War I. They could easily become ‘the black White Guards of America,’ enthusiastic mercenaries who would drown the social revolution in oceans of blood.”¹⁷ As William G. Jordan put it, “Wilson probably felt safer with black soldiers guarding the White House after his declaration of war in 1917 . . . than he would have felt with ‘white ones, who are made up of so many nationalities.’ . . . Also, unlike recent immigrants, African Americans had proven their loyalty by participating in all of the nation’s past wars,” creating what the *California Eagle* referred to as “the splendid illustrious record of the ‘black Phalanx’ from Crispus Attucks and Bunker Hill to Carrizal.”¹⁸

A “middle class black spokesman” took a different tack. “Victorian standards equated ‘manliness’ with ‘whiteness’” and some Negroes hoped that “military service and cooperation with whites’ ‘civilizing missions’ would inspire greater recognition of blacks’ accomplishments, and, therefore, of their masculinity”¹⁹—though Jack Johnson’s “manly” accomplishments suggested that Negro masculinity was being challenged for other reasons altogether.

In any case, neither Harrison and Domingo, though usually perceptive, took into account the flip side of this record: Negro troopers were often in the vanguard of the battle for equality, and they were empowered by the fact that they could make their demands at gunpoint. They were far from being robots who automatically followed orders. Early in 1866, for example, Negro troops were ordered on an arduous march to New Mexico on which “they did not look with favor.” “When informed of their assignment, they became mutinous and refused to go.”²⁰ Nevertheless, the criticisms of Harrison and Domingo bespoke a troubling trend that reached a peak when the Buffalo Soldiers invaded Mexico in 1916.

. . .

It is easy to see why Native Americans find it difficult to celebrate the Buffalo Soldiers. These soldiers were present during the progressive strangulation of Reconstruction; the resultant narrowing of the life chances for African Americans allowed for a more focused concentration on expropriation of Native Americans. Even the celebration of these troops by others is barbed. "Nigger Hill," near the Texas–New Mexico border got its name in 1877 after a fight between the Buffalo Soldiers and Comanches. "The little hill continues to stand as a monument of sorts to the 'Buffalo Soldiers' and the role they played in helping to remove the last Comanche menace [*sic*] to the settlement of . . . Anglo-American ranchers and farmers."²¹ The soldiers were there until the last traces of resistance had been stamped out. They claim that in 1918 they participated in what is viewed as the last Indian battle in the United States, that against the Yaquis along the border. The Yaquis had been a long-term thorn in the government's sacroiliac.²² Though the "frontier" was said to have closed during the 1890s, in fact Washington was still battling Native Americans along the border as the Mexican Revolution was gathering steam and World War I starting. Domestic strikes were occurring as well, further stretching to the limit U.S. military capability.

This multidimensional crisis underscored the importance of the Buffalo Soldiers. In August 1917 there were extraordinary reports from Arizona about a "howling mob of striking Indians and Mexicans, numbering more than one hundred." The "trouble first started this morning when the Indians and Mexicans, without any previous notice, refused to go to work unless an increase in wages was granted. . . . Two IWW organizers have been in camp for the past week," stirring things up; one was a "Mexican who also speaks the tongue of the Apaches."²³ If past patterns held, Negroes would constitute the bulk of the troops brought in to crush the rebellion.

Though Negro troopers were sent to fight the IWW, Du Bois had hailed the IWW "convention of [the] Brotherhood of Timber Workers," since "on every issue the convention was progressive to the core. . . . Native born whites, Italian, Mexicans and Negroes all stood together in one phalanx of workers."²⁴ Negroes from New Orleans and the south and southwest generally had found employment in Tampico, Mexico, after fleeing persecution in the United States. U.S. intelligence noted that "Mexicans" there "all practically belong to the IWW and I find several of the lower class of our people down here advocating labor organizations and getting Mexicans into them, which is as easy as falling off a log, when

it comes to more pay and less work. . . . This town has more renegade[s] and bums from our country than any place in Mexico now, they are lured here by big wages.” Many of the despised men were African Americans, though Negro troopers had the IWW in its crosshairs across the border.²⁵

The U.S. government was very concerned that the IWW, Bolsheviks, and other presumed enemies would establish a beachhead in Mexico, particularly in the region surrounding the Yucatan, where oil and minerals abounded, and that they would influence others ideologically opposed to white supremacy in the United States.²⁶ Militant class-based organizations like the IWW were a potential source of support to Negroes but they were weakened by the Negro troopers. Reports in 1917 had noted “red flag agents active in Douglas [Arizona].” “Not at any time within recent months has there been such a demand for guns and cartridges as has developed among the Mexican residents of that city and vicinity during the last few days.”²⁷ Had this trend escalated, it would have been necessary to dispatch Negro troopers.

The unfortunate Yaquis were caught in the middle, more disadvantaged than the miners and strikers, as they were under pressure on both sides of the border, from Mexico and the United States alike.²⁸ In Mexico, “the U.S. based Richardson corporation . . . and local elites coveted Yaqui land and water rights, and their incursions ignited a rebellion. . . . Just as those Caribbean and South American slave owners who imported male African slaves and worked them to death, growers clearly viewed the Yaqui as a renewable resource.”²⁹ But in 1916, as relations between the United States and Mexico deteriorated rapidly, the U.S. Secretary of State warned Arizona Governor, George Hunt, that the “recent withdrawal of Mexican troops from Yaqui districts has increased the danger of attacks on foreigners and their properties by these Indians. The Consul [in Hermosillo] states that the Yaquis are well armed.” “These Indians obtain their arms and ammunition in the ‘Indian Oasis’ . . . after the withdrawal of Mexican troops.” Approximately “three hundred Yaquis” from the United States were “now cooperating with the hostile Yaquis who remained in Sonora,”³⁰ Mexico.

The “yoris” or whites of this region were “abandoning their houses and properties, the prey of a great Panic . . . leaving their houses and other property, all of which the Yaquis immediately took.”³¹ One “American mining man from Sonora” had seen “many Yaquis with whom he is acquainted personally, who have recently returned from Arizona to Sonora. These Yaquis have brought with them abundant ammunition purchased in

the United States, often by actually depriving themselves of food." The problem for the U.S. government was that "when they are well on the war path and roused to great excitement . . . they do not discriminate" between Mexicans and those from the United States.³² Thus they were raiding ranches in southern Arizona and driving livestock across the border.³³

The Yaquis were said to be "killing and robbing everywhere" in Sonora and across the border. "Terror reigns throughout the regions." Like Negroes and Mexicans, the Yaquis also miscalculated. The word was that "in the event of intervention" in Mexico, "they may be counted on as friends of the United States; that upon due official notice of intervention, they would lend the invading troops any assistance of which they were capable. . . . They intimate that all they would ask in return for this assistance would be reasonable recognition of their claims to the Yaqui Valley Territory and freedom from persecution by the Mexicans."³⁴

The Yaquis, in any case, were wreaking havoc on the Yankees as well as the Mexicans, and Phoenix had no choice but to rely upon the Buffalo Soldiers to ride to the rescue. This crisis gave rise to other proposals. The influential educator David Starr Jordan, exposing the irony of relying on Negro troops to overpower Native Americans, wrote: "The boundary line from Brazos Santiago to Tia Juana, running chiefly through desert country, is unreasonably long, too long for us to keep in order, and its gulches on both sides are beset with horse-thieves and cattle-rustlers (locally known as caballeros and vaqueros) making them as unsafe as the edge of the black belt in Chicago. . . . To this end the boundary should be moved southward to the Canal Zone," a region still heavily dependent on black labor from Jamaica, Barbados, and the English-speaking Caribbean.³⁵ By attacking Native Americans, particularly the militant Yaquis, and easing pressure on the United States, the Negro troopers were only tightening the noose around their own necks and making the "black belt in Chicago" more vulnerable.

Even though the Negro troops were not the only U.S. soldiers to fight the Indians, inevitably they took on the most difficult and intractable battles. In 1916 they were a logical choice for the tricky task of invading Mexico, ostensibly in search of Pancho Villa. In the "Victorio War" of 1879–1880, again on the Texas–New Mexico border, and into Mexico, "the largest share by far of the troops who chased and fought Victorio . . . were black men." These "'blacks in blue' faced Victorio in large part because they were blacks. No portion of the Western frontier confronted the Indian-fighting soldier with greater hardship, discomfort and deprivation

than the Southwest. For nearly twenty years, therefore, while other regiments rotated assignments, the black regiments patrolled the parched, sun-blasted deserts and rugged mountains where Victorio roamed—kept there by the rationalization that blacks adapted better than whites to hot climates.” At this point Mexico and the Negro troops were on the same side seeking to crush the Mescalero Apaches.³⁶

Typically, the Negro troops did the bulk of the fighting. “Regarding one campaign against the Cheyennes in 1867 and 1868 an officer said, ‘The colored men did all the fighting, sustained nearly all the casualties and the white troops received commendation.’”³⁷ Despite their selfless service to the state, their loyalties were viewed as suspect. James Leiker astutely observes that “on the Texas-Mexico border where black civilians were scarce, officers entertained suspicions about Black-Mexican collusion. Most whites who commanded black regulars minimized the extent to which their men ‘mixed’ with locals. But [on] one occasion, they admitted that blacks had an exceptional ‘friendliness’ with Mexicans which encouraged desertions.” In addition, “relationships between black soldiers and Indian and Hispanic women occurred with enough frequency to raise suspicions by officers of racial collusion. With hundreds of black troops stationed on the Rio Grande for two decades, it would be surprising if some soldiers did not grow to prefer Hispanic society and people.”³⁸

Despite the U.S. government’s concern about such ties and what they might mean in times of conflict, there was concern on another score as well. As a U.S. major put it, “suppose there should be a Fenian outbreak or a riot of German socialists, our white soldiers who are largely Irishmen and Germans could not be expected to fight their fellow countrymen with such zeal. But a Negro would not want anything better than a chance to kill some of his hereditary enemies, Germans and Irish. He knows they don’t like them and he likes them no better.”³⁹ Moreover, “Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese and even Native Americans originated from political homelands with which the United States had to deal, governments that could intervene on behalf of their citizens in other countries.”⁴⁰ African Americans, however, carried no such baggage. The *California Eagle*, a Negro newspaper in Los Angeles, put it candidly in the aftermath of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, when people complained that many African Americans were unconcerned about the impending internment of Japanese Americans, and more interested in sharing in the booty looted from them: “Negroes have the greatest opportunity ever offered by the state of California.” The “consensus . . . [is] that somebody must take

the place of these alien farmers and fishermen.” “There lies the opportunity of the Negro,” since “you don’t have to distrust a Negro face in a boat plying in California waters; nor would you need to fear a traitor in our lettuce fields.”⁴¹

Thus, Negro troops were rarely to be found back East but typically they were in the borderlands where national security was still up for grabs, confronting Native Americans—and Mexicans.

Having completed a recent tour of duty in the Philippines and the Great Plains, the 25th U.S. Infantry arrived in the small and arid Texas town of Brownsville, along the border with Mexico, in the summer of 1906. They immediately experienced discrimination, particularly from local businesses and fellow federal employees, that is, customs collectors. A reported attack on a white woman outraged many locals, leading to the imposition of a curfew. The evening of 12 August witnessed a brief shooting spree that took the life of Frank Natus, a bartender, and badly injured police lieutenant M. Y. Dominguez. Witnesses declared that despite the darkness they saw soldiers rampaging through the streets, firing weapons. In the investigations that followed, the soldiers were presumed guilty as a group without identifying individual perpetrators. The ouster of the troops was requested and granted, though the men continued to deny their complicity in the violent episode. After much maneuvering President Theodore Roosevelt discharged “without honor” all 167 enlisted men previously garrisoned at Fort Brown. This case became a cause célèbre nationally, but particularly among an outraged African American community.⁴² The case was pursued aggressively until, finally, in 1972 President Richard Nixon awarded the men honorable discharges without back pay.⁴³

The incident in Brownsville may have been a token of conflicts between Negroes and those of Mexican origin, as much as if not more than Negro-Anglo relations. “Some Anglo border residents, observing the violence between black soldiers and Hispanics, suspected a ‘Mexican conspiracy’ to drive the United States Army from the Rio Grande.” Some scholars see the departure of the Negro troopers from Brownsville as evidence for this hypothesis. Consequently, “from 1906 to 1916 Congress entertained numerous bills to abolish the [Negro] regiments.”⁴⁴

Some of the soldiers were said to have attacked an El Paso jail in 1900 in another conflict, before being dispatched to Fort Brown.⁴⁵ A group of black troopers stormed the jail to free a comrade detained for alleged drunk and disorderly conduct. Their effort left one white El Paso police

officer and one soldier dead; that in turn led them to be shipped to the Philippines and a fervent plea to oust all black soldiers from the state because of their “menacing” behavior. However, “their request was turned down because the Army didn’t have any Anglo soldiers available to replace them.”⁴⁶

Whatever the case, this celebrated affair in Brownsville had a dramatic impact both on the Buffalo Soldiers and on the Mexican Revolution that began shortly thereafter. Anglo opposition to the presence of Negro troops led to a “general reduction of military forces and the closing of two forts within an area with strong revolutionary activity,” which “did create an advantage for Mexican rebels who, in successive years, used the border as a base of operations from which to challenge Porfirio Diaz and his supporters.”⁴⁷ Reflecting the ongoing crisis of white supremacy, “Anglos” pushed Negro troopers out of south Texas, then suffered repeatedly from cross-border incursions.⁴⁸

The incident in Brownsville also led many Negroes to become disillusioned with the military at a time when Native American resistance had not yet been suppressed totally, a revolution was imminent across the border, and a war was about to begin in Europe. One black paper in the west condemned as “‘traitors’ any black [men] who enlisted in an Army which treated [them] so unjustly.”⁴⁹ Not only were blacks calling for a boycott of the military, but those who chose to remain in uniform were less willing to tolerate abuse. By demanding equality at gunpoint, Negro soldiers hastened the erosion of an era when inequality could be imposed casually.

Contrary to many blacks’ opinion, the former black soldier, Allen Allensworth of the 24th Infantry “actually supported the Army’s position in the Brownsville Affair.” During his career he was “involved in numerous encounters with the Native Americans which resulted in commendations from both military and civilian sources.” In a military, which in 1874 “had only 17,819 troops to protect one million square miles of frontier territory,” his presence was greatly valued. Perhaps it was to reward him for his loyalty that the government allowed him, along with four others, to form the California Colony and Home Protection Association and to purchase twenty acres of Tulare County land in the fertile San Joaquin Valley. The idea, culminating in 1908, “was to create a community entirely [of] blacks, a place where they could live and work in dignity, free from racial prejudice that had followed them in California.” Yet even his sympathetic biographer writes that Allensworth “by today’s standards . . . appeared at times

to be too subservient to whites,” a position underscored by his view of Brownsville and by the difficulty his colony had in the Golden State.⁵⁰

In 1911 Negro troopers of the 9th Cavalry were sent from San Antonio to the “desert” in order to forestall another Brownsville incident. These soldiers “had resented the efforts to enforce the Jim Crow laws requiring them to sit in seats in cars provided for Negroes. Several times they tore down signs designating seats for white and Negro passengers and set upon conductors, beating them severely.”⁵¹ A few years later circulars were discovered in “San Antonio black neighborhoods stating that black soldiers were being sacrificed on the battlefields to spare the lives of whites.”⁵² The austere conditions to which Negro troopers were subjected hardly put them in a mood to fight the Mexican revolutionaries. Having to rely upon Negro troops in a land where white supremacy was the law of the land placed an enormous stress upon “race relations”—and on the troopers themselves. It was not easy to be resented and relied upon simultaneously.

This tension was not limited to Negroes but also impacted others of color in the military. Charles Porras, of Mexican origin and a resident of El Paso, recalled that when he was in the U.S. Navy, the Anglos “beat up a Negro mess cook . . . on ship badly in Key West, Florida.” Angered to the quick, Porras told his Negro comrade, “Anytime that you get ready to go down there and you want to punch some of those guys, I’ll go with you.” Sailing into Louisiana, a frequent port of call for the U.S. military and revolutionaries alike, he noticed immediately that “if your skin was just a little dark, brother, that’s it.” In New Orleans, he went into a “dining car and sat down. . . . One of the civilians came and sat down and he turned around and looked at me. I noticed he got up in a hurry. He walks up to the steward and he came back and he said, ‘you think I’m going to sit alongside of that Black so-and-so?’” “When I heard that,” said Porras, still incensed despite the passage of time, “that’s all I wanted. I got up and swung at him. . . . But, oh boy—that left an everlasting memory in my mind that is bitter, very bitter. To think that I was in uniform and I was very well presented; I was a first-class petty officer; clean. And this yokel here—the way he called me ‘that Black-son-of-a-bitch’ . . . I didn’t have any compunction about beating the hell out of him!” Later he was approached again by an Anglo sailor he had pummeled earlier. He was in the shower when this man approached him, accompanied by four others. “And I figured they were going to gang up on me. He said, ‘wait a minute’ and he pulled this arm here. I have this tattoo of an Indian there and he showed it to the other fellows. He said, ‘see I told you. I told you he was

an Indian; he's not a Mexican.' He didn't mind being punched by an Indian but he wasn't going to be punched by a Mexican."⁵³

Negroes, including those in the military, faced their own unique "racial" netherworld. But the widespread presence of Indians and Mexicans in the borderlands provided an escape of sorts. By allying themselves with those who seemed to be firmly in power—"Anglos" or Euro-American elites—African Americans could at once inflate their own importance and perhaps gain a slice of influence.

Though much has been made of another escape route—the ability of some of Mexican origin to be defined as "white" in the census—it is difficult to overestimate the level of antagonism in the borderlands. As one acquaintance of Senator Albert Fall of New Mexico put it, "People of Texas"—whom he defined as "Anglos"—"are more hostile to Mexico and Mexicans" than to all others.⁵⁴ According to a writer in the NAACP journal, *The Crisis*, "It is absolutely true that Mexicans view Americans with dislike and suspicion. . . . This dislike is racial and fundamental. The . . . Mexicans have never forgiven the war by which we Americans forcibly took from them California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas." On the other hand, "our rough-and-ready citizens lack consideration for all dark-skinned races. We deem them all inferiors. The expression of this contempt has estranged our Afro-American fellow citizens, has incensed our Mexican neighbors and," it was added ominously, "may some day involve us in a bloody war with Japan."⁵⁵

Mexicans also felt slighted by Anglos. In 1910 a Mexican along the border complained, "We are treated like Negroes. We are given no . . . respect. When a robbery occurs where we are employed, we are the only ones suspected by the authorities."⁵⁶

In addition, there was what former U.S. ambassador to Mexico, Henry Lane Wilson, termed the "race question" south of the border. Testifying before a Senate committee in 1920, the ambassador, who had served in Mexico City from 1909 to 1913, observed that "every Indian in Mexico who is in touch with the traditions of his race believes and hopes that eventually the white race will be expelled. . . . He carries this belief into all his transactions." Would this "race hatred" fragment the Mexican American community and destabilize Mexico itself, or would it be transferred across the border against "Anglos"? Ambassador Wilson thought that "you must distinguish between the race hatred and hatred of the foreigner because [the latter] was shared equally by the whites and the Indians" in Mexico. Perhaps "whites" in Mexico could deflect "race hatred" that

might otherwise be directed at themselves by directing it at “whites” across the border.

Born in Indiana and a long-time resident of Spokane, Washington, Wilson—who had served in both Chile and Belgium—was no stranger to “racial” and ethnic conflict. Speaking bluntly the ambassador said that “whenever the Indian element predominates, as it does in nearly all of the Latin American states, the tendency to anarchy and revolution is very marked.” This was one reason why “in no other place . . . in the world” besides Mexico “has there been more turbulence and more violent overturnings of government.”⁵⁷

Many Anglos in the United States felt that “Mexico lacked the capacity for self-government because its population was predominantly Indian or a mixture of Indian and European.”⁵⁸ Because of their indifference toward Mexican lives, Mexicans in the United States were also subject to lynchings. As Porfirio Diaz was being overthrown, a Mexican journal noted acerbically that “lynching is not practiced by the blond ‘Yankee’ except upon beings whom, for ethical reasons, he considers as his inferiors. When a Mexican is immolated it is to be inferred that the social conscience of the state of Texas, in her loathsome scorn, compares the son of Negroland with the descendants of Cuauhtemoc.”⁵⁹ The writer was referring to the torching of Antonio Rodriguez in Rock Springs, Texas. He was accused of rape followed by the murder of a white woman; no arrests were made in his slaying.

Mexicans’ reluctance to be treated like Negroes was no doubt sincere, but it did not necessarily make for good relations with African Americans. Of course, such notions were propelled by the putrid “racial” comparisons that were the stock-in-trade of the United States. Edward N. Brown, a U.S. resident in Mexico, testified before Congress during the revolutionary era. The Chief Consul of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee asked naively, “Alabama is largely populated by Negroes, is it not?” He continued, “and quite a percentage is known as mulattoes, mixed with the white? . . . What do you think would be the situation in Alabama if 80 percent of the intellectual classes were excluded from the state and the affairs of the government were in the hands of mulattoes?” Replied Brown, “I certainly would not look for much progress and I think probably, as is supposed to be the case in Mexico, things would go backward instead of forward.”⁶⁰

On the other hand, the racist violence—which such chauvinism encouraged—directed at Mexicans particularly in south Texas—helped to

turn the Revolution in an anti-imperialist, anti-Washington, and anti-Wall Street direction. Ambassador Wilson complained of the “disgraceful rioting” that was becoming commonplace in Mexico City in response to the equally disgraceful activities targeting Mexicans across the border.⁶¹ After an “interview with the President” Ambassador Wilson wrote that he had helped to suppress a critical journal “because of their refusal to stop reporting on ‘anti-American demonstrations.’” As a result of this turbulence, “very strong appeals were made through a number of Mexican papers to the people of this country to cultivate the friendship of the Japanese, making very clear insinuations as to the advisability of an alliance with them in case of trouble with the United States . . . the subject of much comment among the members of the diplomatic corps here.” The ambassador warned that there might be a “secret understanding between the two countries.”⁶²

Relations between Mexicans and African Americans deteriorated amid stories about revolutionary activity leading to the killing of Negroes.⁶³ In fact, this helped some Buffalo Soldiers rationalize their impending invasion of Mexico. In the spring of 1911, for example, a train from Cuernavaca to Mexico City was “derailed by revolutionists” and the “Negro porter, an American citizen, was shot three times,” in “critical condition,” and had his arm “amputated.” He became a walking advertisement back home of how some Mexicans viewed some Negroes, or so it was thought.⁶⁴

This relationship—made all the more intricate because of its cross-border spread—resulted in both danger and opportunity for Negroes and Negro troopers. Certainly, by allying themselves with Washington and state power they could reap a benefit. But since so much of the antagonism directed toward those of Mexican origin was “racial” in nature and tended to strengthen white supremacy, there was the constant danger that by helping to quell resistance on the border blacks would be making things worse for themselves. The post-1910 depiction of Mexicans and Mexican Americans along the border provided an example. “Mexicans and other Latinos were depicted with Negroid features of dark skin, kinked hair, and wide noses and lips. In a replication of Villa’s raid on Columbus, the ‘Houston Chronicle’ ran a sketch of a raid by Mexican bandits, all of them with darkened faces, huge sombreros and exaggerated lips.” This “‘Negroification’ of the Mexican people . . . eroded the status and safety of Hispanics” and was thought to have “produced a slight elevation for African Americans.” In a crazed attack on Latinos in El Paso in the

wake of Revolution-induced hysteria, one “dark skinned Hispanic escaped serious injury by claiming to be black, crying to pursuing whites, ‘I’m a nigger; I’m a nigger.’” Seeking protection under the umbrella of a racist epithet symbolized the abject perils of the “slight elevation” accorded the Negro. By “evoking a shared nationality against foreign enemies, African American spokesmen even discovered a means to denounce antiblack discrimination as unpatriotic and foolhardy.”⁶⁵ This insistent cry became a watermark in years to come for those seeking to erode Jim Crow,⁶⁶ though it was unclear whether adding “racial” chauvinism to national chauvinism was in the best long-term interests of the Negro.

If Negroes were so despised, why did the government rely upon them so heavily for defense? As noted, it was not as if men were thirsting to join the military, which was involved in constant warfare in the borderlands, the Philippines, and elsewhere. Moreover, non-Negroes attracted to the military were often of foreign origin and were thought often to harbor an allegiance to their homelands. Montague Stevens, a man of British origin who was in New Mexico during the Revolution, recalled later that many in the U.S. military were of foreign origin, with some lacking basic English-language skills.⁶⁷ Thus, in 1890 “only 58 percent of the navy’s enlisted force were citizens and 47 percent native-born. . . . By the early 1920s the navy had less than 3 percent naturalized citizens and less than one-third of 1 percent foreigners in its ranks; this in a period in which almost 14 percent of Americans were foreign born.”

This startling transformation was the result of the perceived danger of relying so heavily on immigrants in the military. As one writer put it, “the navy’s program to eliminate African-Americans from the service was equally successful,” for “blacks constituted about 10 percent of all navy enlistees in the 1880s and 1890s. Yet by 1906 less than one in thirty sailors was African-American and by 1930 there were fewer than five hundred black sailors in a navy of eighty thousand men.”⁶⁸ During the time of the Revolution, the United States had nearly a half million foreign-born soldiers of forty-six different nationalities, with one in five soldiers being foreign-born.⁶⁹ One solution for U.S. elites was to hasten the process of “whiteness” or the assimilation of European immigrants—a route that was inherently difficult for African Americans.

The reliance upon foreigners and others with poor English-language skills was particularly prevalent in the front-line state that was New Mexico. At the time of the Revolution, “approximately half of all New Mexi-

cans could not speak the English language and a distressingly large proportion could neither read nor write in any language. With more than 20,000 Native Americans, many immigrants from Europe and Old Mexico, and a dominant Hispanic culture, it was said that New Mexico was 'as diversified in language, habits and origin as the peoples of Central Europe.'"⁷⁰

But some in Washington and the borderlands were unwilling to rely on African Americans, even when they listened to patriotic Negroes. Thus, the highly regarded writer Charles W. Chesnutt pointed to the supposed advantages of using Negro troopers abroad. "No men of our race," he said with confidence, "are enrolled under the banner" of U.S. opponents; this was unlike a "great many young men of German and Austrian descent" who "have been selected to fight in the American army." But even the rising hostility toward Germany, which was thought to be stirring up anti-U.S. sentiment in Mexico, did not persuade the U.S. authorities to follow easily Chesnutt's advice. As he told his Negro audience, "If any of you has any lurking grudge against the white race for its historic attitude toward the Negro, let him take it out on the Germans." The problem, of course, was that many Anglos doubted whether this corrosive "grudge" could be limited only to Germans of the "white race" once blacks had a rifle in hand and "racial" animus in mind.⁷¹

But reducing the number of Negroes in the military only accentuated the problem. For the onset of World War I created a brand new crisis: "New Yorkers disappeared in droves 'returning days or weeks later, when . . . front-line duty' had ended." Anti-Semitism reigned in the military, further complicating the search for an alternative to the Negro.⁷² Because many in the United States were reluctant to serve their country, by default Washington had to turn to the Negro. In Wisconsin, for example, "Byron Nelson, son of Congressman Nelson of this state, a young man subject to conscription" was in "Canada and it is claimed that he went [there] for the purpose of avoiding military service in the United States."⁷³

There were hundreds of thousands of "draft deserters" elsewhere in the United States.⁷⁴ Even in the South, thought to be the citadel of patriotism, Governor Westmoreland Davis of Virginia was "overwhelmed with applications" for draft exemptions.⁷⁵ One of his constituents, J. Walter Hosier, who headed the City Council in Suffolk, Virginia, was envious when he found out that "Gov. Bicket of North Carolina was successful in getting a discharge for many farmers and farm laborers in his state." Why couldn't Governor Davis, the governor of Virginia, "suggest some plan

whereby we might be relieved to some extent"?⁷⁶ With World War I drying up the flow of immigrants and the industrial sector absorbing many men, Hosier was concerned that the state economy would suffer if strong measures were not taken. The *Newark Sunday Ledger*, a New Jersey newspaper, warned of the "dangers of a depleted labor supply due to the large emigration of alien labor," which would mean a "threatened shortage of . . . labor."⁷⁷ Likewise, in Wisconsin there were dire warnings about "labor" being "scarce."⁷⁸ On the border in Arizona, where the problem was even more acute, a "shortage of labor" was "reported in the Salt River Valley and other agricultural sections" of Arizona.⁷⁹ In Nogales, a leader of the Chamber of Commerce worried about a reduction in the "supply of unskilled seasonal labor . . . by sixty percent," which meant the state was "going to be up against it." Moreover, this was "sure to increase the bitterness felt against the United States" in Mexico, the source of the labor, and "result in retaliatory measures."⁸⁰

Despite the exigencies of war, some in Virginia had few qualms about insuring they were "relieved" of military duty. A resident of Henry, Virginia, told the governor that "there is a no. of boys in this community that are slackers. . . . They have sworn lies to keep out of war." Helpfully, a lengthy list of names was provided.⁸¹ There was similar apprehension about being in the line of fire along the border and elsewhere. Such was the case in Pirtleville, Arizona, a region that had come to rely heavily on Negro troopers because others were reluctant to take their place.

The adjutant general in New Jersey was instructed as follows about one George Henderson: "He claims he is under 18 years of age [and has] a pain in his side." His commanding officer did not believe him: "From my point of view," he said with conviction, "[he] is apparently in good health. My personal opinion is that the boy has become tired of being a soldier [and] is pursuing this method to be released."⁸² Those who could not obtain a medical excuse resorted to extreme methods to avoid service. Many serving on the border were part of the National Guard and not regularly enlisted troops like the Buffalo Soldiers. These part-time soldiers were often naively unaware of the stress of the battlefield and found it hard to cope. Corporal John Smith, forty-one, a married man with three children from Paterson, New Jersey, had been "despondent" and "acting in a strange manner." His mates were stunned when he decided to "slash his throat" while shaving his head, which "almost severed his head from his shoulders."⁸³

Then there were the Byzantine and hopelessly authoritarian rules that complicated keeping men in the military. Private Joseph C. Davidson was court-martialed and “dishonorably discharged” in May 1916—in the midst of deteriorating relations with Mexico and the threat of impending war in Europe—simply because he “advised a prospective recruit . . . not to join the [hospital] corps.”⁸⁴

In Arizona, which was on the frontlines of confrontation with Mexico and had a keen awareness of the costs involved, there was a strong disinclination to join the military. The state legislature convened an “extra session” to make an “appropriation for the widows and families of the brave officers who lost their lives in trying to arrest some men who had tried to evade the . . . draft law.”⁸⁵ The profound “difficulty” in “detecting deserters” was “peculiarly disastrous.”⁸⁶

Things were also desperate in neighboring New Mexico. The manpower deficit was so dire that Senator Albert Fall in early 1917 declared himself “ready to resign my position as U.S. Senator” and join the military. “The age limit” for the military “should be increased and the physical examination modified,” he argued. There should be “mounted volunteers” of “ex-peace officers, rangers, sheriffs, cattle men and miners.” But this in turn would have adversely affected the economy and law enforcement alike.⁸⁷

Draft evasion and battlefield jitters, combined with labor shortages, created an opportunity which militant unions sought to exploit to their advantage. It heightened the need for battle-tested Negro troopers, thought to be more reliable than unlettered European immigrants with questionable allegiances. Thus, in Arizona fears about Mexican incursions were accompanied by fears about militant labor. In 1915 Governor George Hunt sought to reassure the general manager of the Arizona Copper Company that the “orders . . . for the mobilization of the National Guard” had been “issued . . . as rapidly as possible.”⁸⁸ He wanted to “insure the preservation of order in the Clifton-Morenci mining district” where “extreme delicacy” and “the ever present necessity of exercising the utmost tact and discretion” were required to confront a “deplorable industrial problem” seething after “years of discontent.”⁸⁹ One industrialist complained that “the sheriff of the county was unable to give adequate protection outside of the county jail.” “Hundreds of our best citizens,” he moaned, “were being driven out of our camps by the threats and violence of the strikers and not a few reaching El Paso in a bruised and battered condition, while

the officers of the law made no attempt at interference.”⁹⁰ Governor Hunt also deplored a “condition whereby nearly five thousand working men are deprived of employment” and “hundreds of families with their slender savings exhausted are entering upon the rigorous winter season without any dependable supply of the necessities of life.” This made for “extreme suffering.”⁹¹

The weekend warriors, otherwise known as the National Guard, had to render “unusual service.” And it imposed “extreme hardships [on] many of the members whose family or business ties were not readily amenable to a prolonged absence from home situations.”⁹² With every passing day, this industrial crisis seemed to be growing in magnitude and taking on a troubling ethnic aspect in light of the distress along the border. It was a “critical situation,” according to a group of influential “Anglos,” since it seemed that the “Mexican employees” had “struck” and “American [*sic*] employees going on shift Monday morning were threatened and intimidated by Mexican strikers.” The non-Mexicans were “badly beaten up and drummed out of town by a Mexican mob.” The “sheriff has left the county and his two Morenci deputies offer no protection.” The “situation” was “critical and intolerable and fraught with grave danger.”⁹³

Opponents of the strikers charged that they were engaged in a form of racial profiling. This was a “serious strike . . . among our Mexican employees” and their “leaders stopped all but few white men in construction from going to work under threat of violence. . . . One man at work [was] badly beaten up this morning by [a] mob of Mexicans who entered [his] place of work and seized him” with the “threat made that all white men will be stopped tomorrow.” Magnates “urgently” demanded “assistance in affording protection of maintenance of order.”⁹⁴ But the question was: “Who are you going to call” for the task?

The answer was evident: Negro troopers. In Bisbee, a miner’s leader asked the Governor to perform a “thorough investigation of the tar and feathering episodes” and “reign of lawlessness” that was “disgracing Arizona for the past year.”⁹⁵ This included deportations to New Mexico, the victims being guarded by Negro troopers. Of the 1,003 interned, 804 were “foreign born” and of those, one-third were said to be Mexican.⁹⁶ Still, the top military man in southern Arizona, who had been “closely observing the strike situation at Jerome,” confessed that “some of the business men desired more troops”⁹⁷ there, which intensified the strategic role of the Buffalo Soldiers. As was noted in 1918, during the “past year our entire National Guard organization has been in the service of the United States,”

that is, engaged in conflict on the border and elsewhere, which limited their deployment for strikes. Adding to the militarism of the state was the growth of rifle clubs. There were “forty-two rifle clubs in Arizona. These clubs are organized in every part of the state” and controlled “a large part of rifles and ammunition.” The beleaguered Arizona Adjutant General acknowledged that “the work of this office has been heavier during the past year than in any year of its existence.”⁹⁸

The labor unrest in Arizona, already a tumultuous border state, accentuated the importance of Negro troopers, who were thought to be more effective at confronting the strikers than virtually any other group. So pressed, Congressman Carl Hayden thought that legislative remedies were needed to address this imbalance and ease the burden on the National Guard.⁹⁹ But it would take more than legislative action to redress the contradiction of black soldiers being the guardians of white supremacy.

CHAPTER 6

Black and Brown Defenders of White Supremacy?

In 1917, as cross-border raids from Mexico increased and war with Germany drew closer, the United States became increasingly dependent for national security on its Negro troopers. Yet powerful forces were seeking to delimit the number of Negroes and those of Mexican origin in the military. That this would jeopardize national security was lost on many.

President Woodrow Wilson, meanwhile, was enforcing “racial” segregation in the nation’s capital. Perspicacious observers wondered if this policy was wise when the country was relying on its Negro and Latino soldiers. Concern escalated in the two most “racially” sensitive regions of the nation, the Southwest and the South. In the former, massive land dispossession was a recent memory, while the South had been wracked by civil war in order to maintain the highest stage of white supremacy.

In Alexandria, Virginia, a central hub on the road to Washington, D.C., there was vigorous protest against the continuance of Negro soldiers as sentinels or guards at each end of the Highway and Aqueduct bridges on the grounds that blacks were a security risk. In October 1917 “at a mass meeting of the citizens” a resolution against this practice was “unanimously adopted.” Where “Negro soldiers have been placed as sentinels or guards in the south,” the resolution declared, with a nervous eye on Re-

construction after the Civil War, “it has in numerous cases resulted in serious casualties and breaches of the peace.”¹ Could Negroes with guns be relied on to defend the headquarters of a white supremacist state?

Emmett Scott, the former chief aide to Booker T. Washington, was outraged by the implications—and imprecations—of this argument. Such talk, he said, tended to “play into the hands of the pro-German elements who are seeking to foment strife and to sow seeds of discord and dissension.”² Others were not so sure.

Thousands of miles away from Washington, in Arizona, where security rested on the shoulders of often aggrieved Negro troopers, similar doubts were expressed. The black newspaper in Phoenix urged Negroes to remain “loyal,” as if this were not a given. A front-page banner headline spoke proudly of how the “famous Tenth Cavalry saves the day at Nogales, Arizona” as they “repulsed the Mexicans.”³ But to ensure that the troopers did not rise up in protest, those in charge of the state’s defense thought it “in the best interests of our country to prevent the presentation” of the movie *Birth of a Nation*.⁴ Jacob Erickson, mayor of Bisbee, where intense labor and ethnic conflict had been brought under control in part by Negro troopers, announced that “the presentation” of this racist film was “turned down.”⁵ A local sheriff agreed, to “prevent presentation of this play [*sic*] in Arizona . . . owing to the protest of colored citizens everywhere against ‘The Birth of the Nation [*sic*]’” in light of the “loyal response and service under volunteer and draft calls by colored men,” and given “consideration of colored men’s feelings.”⁶ These were sincerely stated reasons to steer clear of this so-called cinematic classic.

Another banner headline in the local black newspaper in Phoenix gave another reason for the censorship. A “Black Soldier” was “murdered at Nogales,” “killed by [a] white officer after” the Negro “saluted him with a cigarette in his mouth.” Such behavior was adjudged extremely brash, worthy of being “shot in the back.” Naturally, “civil authorities refused to put” the perpetrator “in the local jail.”⁷ Soon this paper was publishing articles about the exploits of Jack Johnson and his appeals to “you who are lynched, tortured, mobbed, persecuted, and discriminated against” to join him in solidarity with Mexico in its ongoing conflict with the United States.⁸

Back in Jim Crow South Carolina—a state that embodied racism—there were similar worries about whether the Negroes would remain “loyal.” Atypical measure were adopted in response. In Sumter County, in 1917 there was a “plan for organization of [the] colored population,”

which was deemed worthy of emulation in North Carolina. In a rare gesture, the state's leaders first reached out to R. W. Westberry, "a leading and intelligent leader of the colored race," who was "asked to attend our first Council of Defense meeting." To insure his participation they "engaged his services for thirty days, paying him \$5.00 per day," then "had him . . . call about twenty mass meetings of colored men, women, boys and girls" where "thousands of packages of seed such as several kinds of beans, peas, corn and other garden seed" were distributed. Though Negroes in this Deep South backwater were often ignored when they were not being lynched, and solidarity across the color line was viewed as a sin before God, "we had hundreds of white farm land owners . . . insist upon and . . . help their colored tenants and sharecroppers to plant plenty of corn, wheat, oats, vegetables, sweet and Irish potatoes, rice, tobacco, velvet beans, soy beans, peanuts, field peas. . . . We helped them every way we could. . . . We got the darkies to doing just what we were and are still doing." The state leaders were beaming: "Where twelve months ago poverty prevailed and actual want was in evidence," now "nearly every colored family in the county has plenty of chickens, eggs, sweet potatoes, hogs." Their conclusion: "They know now that Sumter County white people are their best friends."⁹ The Negroes could only shake their heads and wonder whether the nation should be under perpetual threat to its security so that tentative steps toward equality might ensue. Once again, this confirmed the crisis—and dysfunction—of white supremacy.

The "loyalty" of Negroes was not a South Carolina issue but a national one, particularly in the South, where the bulk of them lived. The South would be a heavy recruiting ground for Negro troopers who could defend the nation against Villa-style attacks across the border. Yet the National Council of Defense told the southern states to make it "especially clear to their people that this country is not only assisting the allied nations in their defense of their liberty but also that we are fighting for the liberty and freedom of this country." Liberty? Freedom? When would it arrive in Black America? some wondered. These states were told that "churches" were useful as a "meeting place" for Negroes and for winning the hearts and minds of the otherwise alienated. The involvement of "white" officials in these gatherings was emphasized, though in some states that might be deemed illegal.¹⁰ But old habits die hard. Soon the National Council of Defense was complaining that "only two or three" of these southern states "have effected a satisfactory Negro organization" of "vital importance." It added, emphatically, "*we can not urge upon you too*

strongly the need for some immediate action in this matter. The Negroes of your state should be made to feel that they can be of service in the war.”¹¹

But the Negroes had their own ideas. The decade of the Mexican Revolution also witnessed the Great Migration of Negroes from south to west and south to north, which transformed African Americans by making them increasingly urban, and transformed the nation as they gained the right to vote—a “right” they did not generally enjoy below the Mason-Dixon line until 1965. This migration was driven by many factors. Certainly the boll weevil, racist terror, and job openings created by limited European immigration on account of the war were among them. But another factor, seldom acknowledged, was the mass flight of Negroes to avoid conscription for military duty along the border or in Europe.

North Carolina was a good example. In coastal Wilmington, “Jos. Williams” was “last reported at 18 Fleet Place, Brooklyn, NY to which place we have addressed several letters which have not been returned.” Lewis Bryant also had made it to this borough. John E. Wright was now in Michigan. They had “not been able to locate” James Green; John Abbott was in Pennsylvania. “These” and many more were “all colored men” who had disappeared from North Carolina.¹² In the “Laurinburg Division,” for example, there were many more Negroes and Native Americans among the “draft dodgers and deserters” than whites. The same was true for the Elizabeth City Division, Buncombe, and Asheville. Almost all those in the “list of parties indicted in District Court of [Eastern] District for N.C. for violating . . . draft act,” were Negroes—though discriminatory prosecution may have accounted for the preponderance of Negroes, in part.¹³ Those Negroes who managed to make it to the military were often absent without leave. Many were deserters, heading north to freedom.¹⁴

George King, an influential Negro journalist in Wilmington, North Carolina, thanked the state Council of Defense for “the check of \$15.00” before informing them that “I have been away with a number of the leaders of my race at Atlantic City,” where he found many a North Carolinian. “Some of the charity movements up here was [*sic*] so taxed by the exodus of our people from the South last winter that it was a problem.” In words the meanings of which are still poorly understood, he added, “The problems of the South was [*sic*] being transferred here.”¹⁵

Increasingly, the people of the South were being “transferred” northward as well. In early 1917 a report from Camden, New Jersey, then an industrial center and soon to be a symbol for black urban decay, stated that “there is a large emigration of colored people taking place from the

southern states. Seven thousand persons having left one county in Mississippi since last May.”¹⁶ This was exacerbating a national labor shortage, made worse by the simultaneous repatriation by European immigrant workers. A leader of New Jersey labor told his governor that the “emigration of foreign workers now leaving this country in large numbers” was creating a catastrophe. This was leading to “long hours,” “long intolerable hours,” and “men working under [difficult] conditions.”¹⁷ But Negroes, who were flocking to urban areas like Atlantic City to replace these workers, were used to such conditions. The labor shortage in the South was so bad that whites who employed Negroes scrambled to keep them toiling in the fields despite the fact that they despised them. R. P. Bellinger from Bamberg, South Carolina, wanted a thorough “review of the exemption claims” of one of his employees, “a drafted Negro from this county . . . now stationed in the army at Camp Jackson.” He demanded that the “whole matter [be] reopened.” There were numerous such requests.¹⁸

The large number of claims to exempt Negroes from service from “concerned” white employers led to sniping. W. L. Daniel, chairman of the draft board in Saluda, South Carolina, complained to the governor that J. P. Schumpert wanted his “darkey” exempted. But “that family,” he wrote, “has something of a reputation for cloaking Negroes when implicated in doubtful transactions.” These included “making a large part of his money by selling liquor through the medium of darkeys in his employ. . . . This letter is for you only, and I ask that you destroy it after reading.”¹⁹

Conscription raised other issues in the Palmetto State. In Greenwood the local draft board worried that the draft might create or exacerbate “seeming social distinctions between white people . . . based upon earning capacity or social position.” This was no small matter as “there is perhaps in South Carolina a larger percentage of people who believe themselves the victims of social discrimination than in any other state.” Thus, the board argued, “every man who has just a wife and who is usefully employed should be placed in the same class on the ground of dependency.”²⁰ It thought exemptions should be doled out sparingly lest the class conflict that underpinned “racial” persecution be exacerbated.

Similar issues emerged in Wisconsin. There were about “30 men in Marquette County,” said one complainant, “that have married since the 18th of May 1917 . . . causing a great deal of dissatisfaction.” In his view, “they have just cause for a kick. It don’t seem right for a man to be excused from his duty and throw it to another’s shoulders just because he got married to avoid the draft.” These were no more than “slacker mar-

riages” which could only worsen “social distinctions between white people” and even jeopardize “whiteness” itself.²¹

White employers did not have to exert themselves too much to exempt Negroes from the military, for blacks were doing a fairly good job of it themselves. Nathaniel S. Hargrave of Higgs Roanoke Seminary, founded in 1898, reported from Parmalee, North Carolina, that discontent was driving the exodus from the South, and thereby altering the fabric of the nation. “The situation is very grave in this section of the state among my people,” he announced in the autumn of 1918. “I sat in the room where men registered on Sept. 12th for a long time, and I tell you Sir it was a sad thing to see strong looking young men shake their heads no, when I asked to sign their names. We need help.” Apparently unaware of the existence of the NAACP, he promised to “show you Booker T. is not dead for his principles will live.” Through it all, he maintained that the Negro was “loyal,” a sentiment repeated parrotlike through the generations despite evidence to the contrary.²²

Perhaps these Carolina Negroes had heard the same rumors that blacks in San Antonio had heard. In this Texas metropolis, within hailing distance of the border conflict, a “flyer was reported to be circulating in black neighborhoods . . . saying that it was War Department policy to place blacks in the front lines so as to save white soldiers.” This “caused some blacks who had been drafted to flee the city,” further contributing to the Great Migration. There was a “more assertive mood” in Black America, which gave birth a few years later to the renowned “New Negro.” “Perhaps thousands of African Americans on the basis of their religious convictions, stood up to the federal government by refusing to perform military service, despite both broad public disapproval and the likelihood of prosecution.”²³

The prospect of war concentrates the mind wonderfully. Such was the case in North Carolina. “Except in Durham County,” wrote D. H. Hall, a state leader, “[we have] no regular system of communications with the Negroes. We have no way to know as to their feelings about the war, as to misinformation that may spread among them.” The North Carolina Council of Defense decided to “select one or two leading Negroes to meet occasionally with the Council. . . . these Negroes would not, of course, be members of the Council and they would not organize the Negroes”—heaven forbid—“but only be channels of communication.”²⁴

Why should they worry about Negroes being organized anyway? Some white leaders concurred with Junious Grimes, an influential North

Carolina attorney, "My experience with the Negro has been that he is easily led and more easily flattered. . . . I don't believe that they can pull together with other members of the race as a rule, but get to fussing among themselves."²⁵ But this may have been whistling past the graveyard, an attempt to reassure other whites that the Negro would not only be "loyal," but that he had no choice but to only be "loyal" in the face of entreaties from Mexico and its allies in Berlin and Tokyo. However, in unguarded moments a lingering guilty fear was expressed that African Americans would be loath to join conflicts against real and imagined enemies, near or far. This was true even in precincts where Negroes were few and far between. From Black River Falls, Wisconsin, emerged a report about a "barber," a "Negro—the only Negro—barber." He received a "paper" that came "to him by express" and it had "pretty strong stuff in it, all for Germany." There was furious "talk of reporting him."²⁶

With Negroes fleeing, deserting, and obtaining phony exemptions, one would think that white supremacists would be encouraged about the difficulties Negroes were having gaining access to weaponry and military skills. Yet concern persisted. Senator "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman of South Carolina, a white supremacist of the first rank, was also influential in military affairs in Washington. When he thought of Negroes in the military, he was driven to distraction: "Remember that the state was a long time getting any recognition at the War Department after 1876, or getting any arms or other military munitions because during the Negro carpetbag regime arms, uniforms and accoutrements for eight thousand men had been issued to the state and charged against the state in order to equip the Negro militia. It was one of those militia companies, by the way, that the Hamburg rioters mixed with in July 1876." He warned South Carolina's governor, "You are not a fool by any means and do not want to stop the whirl of progress or turn the clock backward"²⁷ by including Negroes in the militia. Thus, "Two or three thousand well-equipped and well-drilled and efficient militiamen are very necessary in the state to preserve order and keep the Negroes from becoming dangerous."²⁸

Despite the troubles on the border and the war in Europe, influential southern whites wanted to keep troops at home to confront potentially "dangerous" Negroes, just as their counterparts in the borderlands were demanding that Negro troopers confront "dangerous" strikers. And even the militia at home had concerns other than getting ready to fight. John Hertz Brown, a reserve officer and an attorney from Spartanburg, South

Carolina, wanted a postponement of the “militia . . . encampment,” as the current date for this gathering conflicted with an election where “250 to 300 or more voters will be unable to cast their ballot in the first primary.” Since “most” were “good anti-Bleasites,” he thought the governor might want to comply with his desires.²⁹ This was in June 1916, when Villa’s raid on Columbus, New Mexico, dominated newspaper headlines.

The governor of Virginia faced similar worries. At a time when the nation was embroiled in severe border conflict and a fiercer conflict was impending in Europe, with a concomitant drain on manpower, he had to worry about Virginia’s blacks gaining access to arms. Nick Chiles, the rambunctious black journalist from Topeka, touched a sore spot when he told Governor Davis that “the governor of Kansas and Adjutant General have already authorized the organization of a regiment [of Negroes] in this state and they are now being mustered in.”³⁰ Why didn’t he do the same? The governor was incensed. Once there were “twenty-three companies of colored infantry” in Virginia, he responded, “officered by men of their own race . . . but discipline was not maintained” and “at no time was it thought safe to call them out for riot duty.” In any case, because “white men would have resented their efforts to exercise authority,” they were “reduced to eight,” and dispatched abroad to fight during the Spanish-American War. These men “were guilty of the most violent breaches of discipline and had to be disbanded” and were “better . . . used for farm hands” than for soldiering.³¹

Another Virginian thought it a better idea to form regiments of Negroes and march them out of the state. J. P. Matthews of Norwood, Virginia, told the governor that “there is now, fortunately, a tendency of Negro exodus to the North and West. Here is the key to the effective and peaceable solution of the race question, let him become equally distributed over the country and the sentiment of the Nation will then be that of the South.” Altruistically, he offered to “take the lead in encouraging Negro emigration. If necessary, pay them a premium to get away.”³²

Mississippi Senator James K. Vardaman agreed with this radical approach. In 1916, as relations with Mexico plummeted, he “sought congressional support to bar anyone of ‘Negro or colored’ descent from enlisting or re-enlisting in America’s armed forces.”³³ On the other hand, some “local [draft] boards made special efforts to draft African-American farm owners so that whites could claim their land. Some black Texans alleged their draft agents impressed as many blacks as they could in order to avoid

drafting whites. The disproportionate percentage of blacks in Texas conscripts bore this allegation out. They composed 16% of the state population but 25% of its draftees.”³⁴

The need to fight a war while maintaining white supremacy was tying the nation into knots. Thus, in South Carolina, immediately after war was declared in Europe “4000 black men joined white volunteers, precipitating white alarm. . . . Soon blacks were virtually excluded from voluntary enlistment.”³⁵ But there was no compensatory rush to enlist by whites, notwithstanding Guy Randall Hammond, “grand-nephew of James Henry Hammond, Governor of South Carolina in 1848,” and a noted white supremacist, who “lived for a number of years in Mexico; knows the country and the language; [and] has had experience in guerilla warfare.” He could hardly make up for the limitations of Negro enlistment.³⁶

Just as southern politicians had a mordant fear of arming Negroes, so too U.S. military officers along the border dreaded placing rifles in the hands of Chicanos and lost sleep about the numerous Mexicans in their midst. This also highlighted the crucial importance of the Buffalo Soldiers along the border. In 1914 A. L. Prattier of the Rodeo Trading Company told the governor of New Mexico, “Now that it seems inevitable that there must be a war with all Mexico and in view of the exposed location of Rodeo [New Mexico] . . . what we more fear is the Mexicans at and around the mining camps in Arizona northwest of us. . . . That they would rob and murder on their way, not only for their revenge but also to get outfits together. . . . Rodeo is noted for having the largest and most stores in proportion to its inhabitants of any little town in the country and for that reason it would be quite a temptation to a passing bunch of Mexicans.” In light of this, he asked, “Could you arrange to have a small troop stationed here?”³⁷ Most likely Buffalo Soldiers answered the call.

Would “Old Mexico Mexicans” remain “loyal” in case of a conflict with Mexico? Some in Las Cruces were “uneasy for fear the old Mexico element in that vicinity (between 400 and 500 people) would give trouble. . . . The situation might be serious in the event of the trouble between the United States and Mexico. . . . The present situation is the most serious we have faced,” noted Harry Henning, the adjutant general of New Mexico. In the pivotal year of 1916 the “railroad section foreman” in a small town said “he believed small bands of old Mexico Mexicans were in communication with the Mexicans working for him” and they all were up to no good. In another town many were “very much disturbed because of ru-

mors to the effect that the old Mexico Mexicans working in the mines of Arizona and New Mexico would rise up and start for old Mexico, and in so doing come down this . . . valley, driving off stock and”—like a posse of avenging Latino Nat Turners—“killing the people as they went.” These Anglos were “very much alarmed about the possibility of Old Mexico Mexicans from the mines” engaging in mischief. “I advised them to form an organization, supply themselves with guns and ammunition and the event of any such trouble as they fear, to meet at a centrally located point and notify the nearest military station.”

Throughout the state some people worried about the “possibility of an uprising on the part of the old Mexico Mexicans.” In Lordsburg, a state emissary “met a number of citizens who seemed to be very much worried.” As elsewhere, they “seemed to fear the old Mexico Mexicans working in the mine near Lordsburg and there were a number of indefinite rumors which had wrought them up to a pitch of great anxiety. . . . A certain American living near the mines, who had married a Mexican wife, had given the information that the old Mexico Mexicans were to rise on a certain day, loot the town of Lordsburg and skip over into old Mexico and this rumor had been so persistent that a number of people in Lordsburg were very much afraid because of it.”³⁸

The authorities were instructed in 1914 that “if several hundred Mexicans who are now working in the mines and on the farms in New Mexico should band together to cross the border into old Mexico that they would undoubtedly commit depredations and cause a great number of deaths among our own people before they could be stopped on the border by the government troops.”³⁹ Ironically, those “government troops” would probably have been the descendants of enslaved Africans who marched on eighteenth-century South Carolina in Stono’s Rebellion just as they were now to march against “Old Mexico Mexicans.”

And what about “New Mexico Mexicans”? In 1915 the adjutant general in New Mexico observed with concern that “recently owing to disturbed conditions in old Mexico a very great number of refugees have crossed the line and accepted jobs in New Mexico. As far as the officials are able to determine at sight it is almost impossible to tell whether a man is a Mexican American citizen, or whether he is an old Mexico Mexican, consequently opposed to any form of government.” But it was the latter whose presence seemed to excite the U.S. government. Near the Arizona border “in the mining sections” there were “probably 7000 or 8000 old Mexico Mexicans working in the mines.” Some “old Mexican agitators . . . [were]

working among these miners” because of whom there had been a “big strike in the Clifton and Morenci mining sections of Arizona, which is very near Lordsburg [New Mexico].” Again, Buffalo Soldiers were seen as the solution: “The presence of federal troops would tend to keep down any disturbances.”⁴⁰

Senator Albert Fall agreed with his constituents, who complained of “the presence of Old Mexican miners and wood cutters all [of] whom have rifles and ammunition.” They “constitute a grave menace to individuals as well as mills and stores” as there was “no assistance available within eighty miles. Raiders could be safely scattered among Mexican ranches on Rio Grande within twenty four hours.” The senator recommended the immediate “federal confiscation of arms held by Mexican citizens.”⁴¹ In sum, those defined as “Mexican” in the borderlands were viewed in a negative way, similar in some senses to those viewed as “African” in the South.

But again, what about the “New Mexico Mexican” soldiers? Were they viewed the way Negroes with weapons in the Carolinas were? They probably thought so, since discrimination against soldiers termed “Spanish American” was rampant. New Mexico was the principal state involved. A typical incident in 1919 was described by James E. Merchant, an experienced military man of the “Asociacion Cooperativa Colon Mercantil” in Gallup. “I am an Anglo-American,” he said, “and was in troop E Rough Riders in 1898.” But his experience had not prepared him sufficiently for what he witnessed at Fort Wingate. “I was present in [the] mess hall when Lt. William King ordered these young [Spanish-American] men to eat at [a] separate table. . . . Officers of the post discriminated against them and in every way made them feel that they were inferior and that the majority of them quit on account of unjust treatment.”⁴²

Charles Cerny of Albuquerque agreed. These men, he said, were “treated more like alien enemies than American citizens.” One officer “advised” that he “wanted no Mexicans on the force. I certify that these young men were forced to quit the service for the above reason.”⁴³ Grover Caynor joined the chorus of dissent, adding that “these young men were treated with every indignity, they were discriminated against and humiliated by being ordered to eat at [a] separate table, were refused the privilege of bath rooms and [were] treated more like an alien enemy than American ex-soldiers who had offered up their lives to this country.” But a certain superior officer had made it clear that “he wanted no Mexicans on his force.”⁴⁴

Even so, the position of “Spanish Americans” was not altogether comparable to that of African Americans in the South. The former could aspire to high office, to cite one difference. Jewish Americans could too, although that did not prevent Leo Frank from being lynched in Georgia during this same era.

Joe A. Franca of Gallup, New Mexico, certainly thought his grievances were real. “We were treated as an inferior race. [They] tried to force us to eat at separate tables.”⁴⁵ The South was very familiar with such old-fashioned U.S. apartheid. Mike Holguin and Jose Garcia of El Paso did not think they enjoyed “racial” privilege. They told the governor of New Mexico, “We were ordered out of mess hall to another table this week and resigned our positions today rather than . . . submit to the discrimination shown [those] of Spanish-American descent. . . . Our pay is less” too.⁴⁶

The fact that a number of “Anglos” were willing to speak out against this form of segregation suggests that being anti-Mexican was not a central part of their identity. T. B. Leftwich told the governor that one officer said, “You Mexicans use this table.” He exclaimed in disbelief, “They wanted to segregate them, hurd [*sic*] them to themselves, it’s a damnable shame, further these Spanish boys are never made chiefs of squads or given any recognition regardless of merit. I have not one drop of Spanish blood in me, but am an Anglo-American, but I resent this treatment.” Leftwich sought to reassure the governor that he was no militant: “Now Governor, I do not want to raise any race question, but are we to have a preferred citizenship based upon nationality? If so, God pity the coming children of this country.” Though he feared that speaking out “may cause me to loose [*sic*] my position,” he refused to tolerate the “humiliation of men whose only crime is being of Spanish descent.”⁴⁷ Similarly, James J. Votam of the Albuquerque Central Labor Union remarked, “If these Spanish-Americans were good enough to shoulder a musket to go into the trenches and go over the top on the battlefields,” then “they are good enough to associate with [us] at home.”⁴⁸

But tension between “Spanish American” soldiers and “Anglos” escalated as relations between Mexico and the United States deteriorated. In one troubling incident in Hachita, New Mexico, “Mexican soldiers” were accused of being “drunk and disorderly and disturbing the peace,” though “there was hardly a necessity for the Deputy Sheriff to club them as he did.” This law enforcement officer had a distressing “habit of handling his six-shooter to beat unarmed men,” particularly those who were

“unarmed” and spoke Spanish.⁴⁹ In 1916, as tensions on the border intensified, other reports from Hachita, New Mexico, spoke of a “lawless element [that] has been abusing and otherwise maltreating peaceful Mexicans.” There was “abusing” and “cursing.”⁵⁰

Arizona’s governor was heard to say of Yuma that the “situation at this point [is] extremely threatening, in [the] last two days the town has been filling up with suspicious characters. Period. The attitude of many of the border Mexicans who are here is quite defiant. We fear the worst at any moment. . . . It is absolutely necessary that we have immediate protection.”⁵¹ But who was to provide it—persecuted Negro troopers or increasingly alienated “Spanish American” ones?

Bisbee, Arizona, faced a similar problem. Its mayor complained about the “three thousand Mexicans” there, “many of whom are antagonistic to Americans.” He thought it “probable [that] the ten local peace officers would be utterly unable to cope with the situation,” leaving the 25,000 residing in the area bereft.⁵² An Arizona politician demanded that a “company of soldiers” be “stationed at Clifton. A majority of the miners in that district are Mexican. They have just come out of a long and heated strike against the mining company. Disorder reigned for six or seven months, and I am afraid that these people, knowing their numerical strength, might take advantage of the opportunity to create disturbances.”⁵³

The mayor of Nogales said the “situation” in his town was “extremely critical.” In fact, he wanted his city “placed under martial law”—a draconian measure that would have suspended due process of law and curbed constitutional liberties. He thought Nogales was “full of Mexicans and recruiting for the Mexican army [was] going on openly,” while the “local authorities [were] unable to handle the situation.” He wanted nothing better than to “intern suspected Mexicans.”⁵⁴ President Wilson was informed of the “distressing” conditions along the border, rife with “apprehension.” The “entire Southern Arizona border from Nogales to Yuma, a distance of several hundred miles has not a single guard on it,” leaving the “people, absolutely defenseless.”⁵⁵

El Paso was hardly better off. A U.S. general thought the “situation” was “very delicate mainly on account of a large number of Villa sympathizers and refugees but also because there is considerable feeling against Americans.” But resources were stretched thin. They had to “reduce the Twentieth Infantry by one battalion sent to Columbus and two companies sent to Deming,” yet they required a “regiment infantry” to be “ordered to El Paso to arrive there as soon as possible.”⁵⁶ U.S. Senator Morris Sheppard

was told that the “population on the Texas side of the Rio Grande runs as high in some instances as 75% Mexican and that in the event of war the Mexicans on this side would rise and join the Mexicans in arms on the other side.”⁵⁷

From Long Beach, California, came the “fear” that “there will be an uprising of the Mexican population here in California. . . . There are thirty-five thousand Mexicans in Los Angeles and some of them have been caught with arms here in Santa Monica, Venice and Los Angeles.”⁵⁸ The Wall Street attorney Roger Sherman Baldwin thought he knew why. “The Spanish-American of today in Southern California,” he mused, “has not forgotten how the Americans [*sic*] in ’48 unjustly declared the land patents of his ancestors invalid, and confiscated their estates. Among the great mass of Mexican peasants the fact that Americans in the swashbuckling expedition of ’48 took away a great slice of the most fertile part of the country, has never been forgotten.” He took the time to visit a “Connecticut agricultural college” and became “pretty intimate with a body of students there, sons very largely of farmers.” They were “more conservative than city bred men” and, he concluded, “there isn’t a man with whom I have talked recently who isn’t in favor of our troops getting out of Mexico, at once. . . . We are standing on the edge of a volcano.”⁵⁹

But if the problem was so dire, who was going to take care of it? Egmont W. Pohle of Lansdale, Pennsylvania, writing to the Secretary of War, answered: “To settle Mexico trouble quickly, I would set up two big armies . . . Army No. 1 would be an Indian Army. Army No. 2 would be an [*sic*] Negro army.”⁶⁰ They could handle difficult climates and, apparently, their lives were expendable. But would they heed the call of the nation that had maltreated them?

Take Native Americans, for example. In the 1890s Secretary of War Redfield Proctor, “impressed with the black regiments, authorized the establishment of regular companies consisting of Native Americans.” However, the response was poor: “At its peak in 1892, . . . fewer than 800 Native Americans were employed as regular soldiers. In 1895 dwindling numbers caused the project to be abandoned.”⁶¹

But some Native Americans had been deployed to subdue the Yaquis and the Mescalero Apaches and had distinguished themselves as trackers and scouts in Mexico. As General John Pershing was pursuing Pancho Villa, he hailed the “Apache Indian Scouts” who were “proving valuable in trailing.”⁶² But perhaps memories of the violent “Indian wars” made some government officials apprehensive about recruiting them. In 1916 an

agent of the Indian Service of the U.S. Department of Interior wrote that “the Indians are particularly well adapted to scouting and light cavalry duty and are at home under conditions which would prove difficult for other troops to cope with,” such as “lack of adequate equipment.” But the authorities were not enthusiastic and preferred to manage without them in case of an armed attack.⁶³

Clearly, they were unsure in which direction armed Indians would turn their weapons. From Nogales in 1916 the U.S. Indian Service reported repeated “Yaqui Indian raid[s]” buttressed by the newest foe: an “IWW agitator delivered addresses on Sonora side today telling of cooperation to be expected from Mexicans in Arizona and New Mexico in event of attack on Americans,” and threatened to “destroy railroads and many cities.”⁶⁴ Thus, when Washington started “organizing the Indians in the vicinity of Tucson, Arizona,” for “protection against raiding bands of Mexicans,” it emphasized that “it is very important not to arm any persons who cannot be fully controlled from the start and who might not be properly disciplined.”⁶⁵ Even the preoccupied Secretary of War, Newton Baker, took time in 1916 to contemplate “protection against Indian uprisings by Mexican sympathizers.”⁶⁶ This explosive mixture of IWW rebels, Native Americans yet to be subdued, and those of Mexican origin sympathetic to the Revolution distinguished the borderlands from the South, and enhanced the role of Negro troopers.

But one thing the South and the borderlands did share was a reluctance on the part of many Anglos to commit to the military. While African Americans were not good enough for the southern military and “Spanish Americans” and some Native Americans were not good enough for the West, this high-handedness left both regions badly exposed when foreign foes emerged. Thus, in 1916 as New Mexico was under armed assault by bands led by Pancho Villa, G. Volney Howar, a civic-minded attorney in Taos, had to “regret to report that I find it impossible to recruit men for attachment to the organized Company of the National Guard for border patrol service. . . . Most are not very keen for the border patrol.” Howard assured the military that “should war be actually declared this section would at once send a good quota of men, but just now, they don’t appear anxious or willing to join existing companies from other sections for border patrol service.”⁶⁷ Confirming his observation, the *New York Tribune* observed that despite the threat “the Texas companies responded promptly but in the other two states [Arizona and New Mexico] the call has not

met with as quick a response as officials expected.” And despite Texas’s comparative alacrity, “all three states have been found to be below their proper strength.”⁶⁸

In August 1916 it was reported from McAllen, Texas, that “five more officers in the New York division resigned today. The necessity of choosing between being business men or soldiers, which has already resulted in the withdrawal of three officers,” led to this decision.⁶⁹ After a “careful study,” the Merchants’ Association of New York, “urgently” recommended “that the units of the New York state militia now remaining on the Mexican border at once return to their homes.” “Further retention there is unnecessary,” since “the absence of the officers and men composing these units acts as a great hardship.” This “decided hardship upon the employers” could not be tolerated.⁷⁰

Others “refused to serve because they felt that the job of national defense was the responsibility of volunteers of the Regular Army.” Still others did not take the militia seriously. For example, a “Scandinavian long distance runner named Kolehmainen . . . had been induced to join the New York National Guard so that [he] could wear the regiment’s colors in athletic games; this man regarded the New York militia as just another athletic club which sponsored deserving athletes.” Back in Texas, a dry state, an “enterprising Texan suggested organizing a private club—like a country club—where members legally could consume liquor taken from their own lockers on the club grounds.” They were “entered on the books of the Adjutant General of Texas as [a] company of the Texas militia.” Though “none of the men had any intention of undertaking any actual military service,” all “found themselves defending the nation at the border.” Like their comrades—and unlike Negro troopers—“few” of these men “were in any condition to do any fighting. Thirty per cent of them were found to be physically unfit for service. . . . In the Florida regiment, six hundred of the eight hundred men who reported (the regiment was 471 under strength in reporting) were rejected. Of those who were accepted as ‘fit’ throughout the nation, an alarmingly great number leaned toward downright obesity.”⁷¹

And as the battle got more heated, the soldiers became scarcer. General John Pershing complained that since the 1916 invasion of Mexico, the military was “constantly losing men by discharge.”⁷² As one general put it in exasperation, “after [Villa’s] Columbus raid scores of towns in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona applied for troops either as protection from raids or

activities of resident Mexicans; even if I had had at my disposal all remaining Infantry and Cavalry in the United States, their appeals could not have been met.”⁷³

“How many [draft] resisters and evaders were [there]?” asks the historian Daniel La Botz. “Millions,” is his answer. “In addition,” he writes, “the U.S. Provost Marshall General reported that 337,649 men who had registered either failed to report for induction when called by the draft boards or had deserted after arrival at the military camp. . . . The number of war resisters and draft evaders, slackers of all sorts, may thus have reached nearly four million.” Many of these men chose to flee to Mexico, thereby contributing to Mexico’s antipathy toward the United States. Senator Albert Fall said that about thirty thousand draft evaders from the United States were in Mexico. They chose Mexico because it was difficult to leave the country by ship, and Canada, being part of the British Empire, was more cooperative than Mexico in seeking to bring violators of U.S. law to account.

Two of the nation’s largest immigrant groups, the Germans and the Irish, were becoming increasingly critical of the tilt of U.S. foreign policy toward the Empire.⁷⁴ Some Germans residing in the United States wound up in Mexico.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, “compared to whites, African-Americans were nearly three times as likely to be charged with draft delinquency.”⁷⁶ Either this was because they felt less allegiance to the nation than whites or because the system of filing charges was infected with racism—or perhaps it was a combination of the two.

All this highlighted the growing strategic importance of Negro troops, as Du Bois, among others, sensed. He cited a mainstream source that noticed that South Carolina had not met its quota for troops for the military: “no section of America has made so poor a response to the call for volunteers as the South,” yet “they protest against Negro soldiers,” the bulwark of the military.⁷⁷ How long would this contradiction persist? Besides, the military along the border was inefficient. “Armories” were “used for improper purposes,” and “members of the Guard” were, *inter alia*, “taking intoxicating liquor on the premises.”⁷⁸ There was repeated “loss of arms and ammunition,” which may have leaked across the border into Mexico.⁷⁹ There were “losses and misuse of government property,” “stealing,” and “converting” property for the “use” of the culprits.⁸⁰ Not only was there “considerable loss of federal property” but the “Mexican situation . . . caused . . . a great deal of expense” and brought with it “extraordinary conditions.”⁸¹

All the while, there were complaints from the “organized militia” in Arizona about “incomplete . . . equipment” which “has caused considerable dissatisfaction among Company Commanders,” as reliance on Negro troopers grew, along with reluctance to incorporate “Spanish Americans” into the ranks.⁸²

The reluctance of “Anglos” to rally to the military and their inefficiency once they got there may have contributed to the worsening situation in civil society, especially between “Mexicans” and “Anglos.” Even beyond the tense borderlands, “rifle ranges” were “having a boom . . . with the Mexican trouble responsible.” One “enterprising range owner [was] making money hand over fist by the simple arrangement of putting up as a target a man’s head over which appears the catch line ‘Huerta—Give it to him, boys!’”⁸³ The problem was that in some parts of the borderlands, critical distinctions were not made between this Mexican leader and those who may have simply resembled him or shared his ethnic heritage.

And what if there were negative stereotypes of Indians, given the sizable indigenous population there? Ernest Forbes of the Conservative Rubber Production Company in California complained to Senator Fall of New Mexico that “to leave the Indian Huerta—who has all the faults of his race and none of the virtues—to rule over the Mexican people would be as bad. . . . To give the franchise to fourteen millions of ignorant Indians . . . is to forever create anarchy in Mexico, for it is impossible for us who have lived many years in Mexico to believe that the Indian can exercise intelligently any such right conferred to him.”⁸⁴ A good deal of the animus directed at Mexico was driven by a motive force of U.S. history: anti-Indian bias and the fact that a good deal of Mexico’s population was Indian.

A leader of the NAACP wrote to the *New York Times* in 1922 in the wake of the lynching of a Mexican national. He was responding to an article stating that “in such places as Breckenridge [Texas] the Mexicans are regarded as on a level with the Negroes.” This was an “amazing admission,” the NAACP leader declared. “The conclusion to be drawn from your statements . . . is that a Mexican is as likely to be lynched in Breckenridge as a Negro; and that a Negro is likely to meet death at the hands of a mob for any reason or for no reason. The only omission from your admirable statement demanding protection for Mexican nationals in the United States is a demand for federal protection to be accorded in Texas to United States citizens irrespective of color.”⁸⁵ But those of Mexican origin had a patron in Mexico City with state power, a military, and powerful global force that could compel—with help from Berlin and Tokyo—the

United States to bend a knee. Negroes, on the other hand, had none of these advantages.

Still, it was evident that some were seeking to draw parallels between white supremacy in the South and the borderlands. The NAACP took note of the words of Theodore Brinson, who asserted, "If it is good politics to accord Spanish-Americans their constitutional rights, would it not be good politics to grant Afro-Americans the same rights?" The "dogs of war" were "tugging at the chains" of the nation, with "great world events in the making" particularly in the borderlands. While this was having a positive effect on the destiny of "Spanish Americans," what about "Afro-Americans"? But "strangely enough," the NAACP added, "many of the Spanish-American members of the House" in New Mexico did not react very well to the introduction of a "social equality" bill in the legislature. They "took the measure as personal to themselves." They were upset that the "Spanish-American had been discriminated against in certain hotels, restaurants and barber shops"⁸⁶ but did not seem to see the need to apply such legislation beyond themselves. Even Charles Porras, who was sympathetic to black concerns, conceded that the "paisano [Mexican] was looked upon as just a couple of degrees above the Negro."⁸⁷ But with Negroes like Henry O. Flipper helping to dispossess the "Spanish American" and Negro troopers keeping them in check, it was not easy for the two major victims of racism to forge an alliance.

The reluctance of many Anglos to join the military coupled with the hesitance of Black and Brown to do so, contributed to an unprecedented crisis on the border. On the U.S. side of the borderlands homes were ransacked, citizens were killed, and chaos often ruled. Law and order had broken down in Mexico because of revolutionary turmoil. Coercive diplomacy on the part of the Mexican authorities in an effort to exact concessions from the United States was accelerating.

Soon after Porfirio Diaz had been ousted, U.S. leaders began to worry about cross-border repercussions. Brigadier General W. S. Schengler concluded that "it is probable that the revolutionists will sooner or later perpetuate outrages against the American miners and property owners south of the [border]." Moreover, "it would be difficult to promptly assemble a sufficient force at any one point, as we have practically no reserve. Furthermore, some of the troops at my disposal"—he was at Fort Huachuca in Arizona where Negro troopers were amassed—"will have to be replaced by other troops."⁸⁸

The U.S. government complained to Mexico about the attacks along the U.S. border. Countless U.S. citizens were murdered in Mexico and along the border during the second decade of the twentieth century, especially during the peak years of 1915–1916.⁸⁹ In 1916 a U.S. general warned of a “campaign of agitation against the Americans” in Mexico, causing “intense feeling,” so “that it is now unsafe for Americans to go into Mexico.” The “feeling against Americans is stronger now than it has ever been . . . in the northern part of the republic. I think it is foolhardy for American women to go into Mexico at this time.”⁹⁰

There were numerous accusations of crime. Jose Vazquez, Pablo Leal, and Prospero Sainz—“dangerous agitators” all—were accused of “stealing arms and horses in San Diego, California.”⁹¹ In the nearby Imperial Valley a “sufficient number of federal troops” were sought to protect a “system of canals” against the “danger of destruction” from Mexico.⁹² In San Antonio a “powerful group” of “Villistas” or followers of Pancho Villa was said to be raising hell.⁹³ In February 1917, “a Mexican from Pilares got drunk and announcing his intentions to exterminate the ‘Gringos’ shot Mr. [Bert] Whitehead, manager of the Nacozari Stores . . . through the abdomen and a timekeeper named Kerr in the leg.”⁹⁴

But as destructive as it was, the damage done to U.S. lives and property paled in comparison with what was happening to U.S. lives and property in Mexico itself. Harsh revenge was exacted against the “Colossus of the North.” A *Los Angeles Times* account referred to “savagery never before reached” in the area, not to mention “madness” and “wanton destruction . . . at the hands of [Mexico’s] bandit soldiery.”⁹⁵

Over and over again, the United States requested protection for its tens of thousands of citizens and millions of dollars in investments in Mexico, often to no avail. Among the assets that were attacked in Mexico were the appropriately named “Exploitation Company,” controlled by the Hearsts—and numerous others.⁹⁶ Indeed, the revolutionary epoch witnessed a profound disruption of U.S. holdings in the multimillion-dollar mining industry.⁹⁷ Mexican antagonism toward the United States stretched as far back as the war of 1846 and the subsequent seizure of Mexican assets. William Randolph Hearst, for example, “owned vast haciendas in northern Mexico and wrote to his mother that ‘I really don’t see what is to prevent us from owning all of Mexico and running it to suit ourselves.’”⁹⁸ He was to be disappointed.

In 1913, from the corner of the nation where Arizona met California came the startling report that Mexican rebels had burned a bridge near

the border “and are now marching on Mexicali.”⁹⁹ The mayor of Nogales told the Arizona governor that “there has always been until recently very pleasant associations between the residents of this place and our neighbors from Mexico,” but things were changing. “Within the last few years,” he said, “a large number of refugees have been domiciled here.” When “under the influence of liquor . . . [these] mostly young men . . . forget the respect which anyone owes to a country that gives them a haven of refuge.” Emboldened by Mexican attacks across the border, these men “have frequently referred to the citizens and soldiers of this country in the most vulgar and profane manner,” with “expressions (in Spanish) [that] are quite frequently uttered within hearing of a party or parties who understand Spanish . . . saying what they would do to them when they caught them on the Mexican side of the [border].” This had led to ferocious battles. “Some general scrapping occurred with the Mexicans at the first outnumbering the others, reinforcements arrived until there was quite a number on each side—all fighting . . . with the fists.”¹⁰⁰ Though it has been popular to mark 1917 as the end of the revolutionary turmoil, in 1919 casualties continued on the U.S. side of the border, as a number were wounded by bullets emanating from Mexico.¹⁰¹

In California the office of Governor Hiram Johnson received an avalanche of letters of protest and appeals for assistance. This increased the importance of the experienced, skirmish-hardened Buffalo Soldiers. For as the *New York World* newspaper commented in 1916, “The Twenty-fourth Infantry, a Negro regiment is the only unit of the American army recruited to full war strength. The men are also among the largest physically of any American soldiers.”¹⁰² Aware of this reality, Du Bois observed tartly that “while officers are tearing their hair to get white recruits, the sign is up, ‘no colored men wanted.’ Does it not seem a ridiculous program [of] preparedness, which deliberately excludes the best material we’ve got?” What made it even more absurd was the fact that “there have been notably fewer desertions from the colored regiments than from the white.”¹⁰³ As it turned out, the United States needed every one of these Black Giants to confront Mexico and its formidable allies.

Speaking for his committee, Reverend Edwards Burger told the California governor that “we the citizens of San Ysidro assembled in mass meeting unanimously and respectfully” demand that “you . . . personally support . . . urging” the federal government to “return to our town soldiers for protection of life and property in view of Tecate outrage and reported increase of troops in Tijuana.”¹⁰⁴ But the governor was receiving

similar appeals for aid from far and wide and could not satisfy everyone. The publisher of the *Brawley Daily News* was “now eager to know when troops will arrive . . . danger at Calexico increasing hourly . . . when can we expect troops[,] may be necessary for Valley to arm.”¹⁰⁵

Not satisfied with the governor’s response, Mayor Andrew C. Baskin of Calexico informed Sacramento that “we are unable to conclude that our forty thousand inhabitants located principally in five cities averaging ten to fifteen miles distant from each other and on ranches over a tract of seven hundred thousand acres all within twenty miles of this city not to mention our crops and real property can be safely protected by approximately two hundred federal troops.” This was not his only concern: they needed troops “particularly in view of our very considerable Mexican population who however thus far have been very friendly but who are quite naturally in sympathy with their mother country.”¹⁰⁶ One border town sounded even more desperate and despairing, saying they were “defenseless” and warning of the “danger [to] our city and its water supply,” since “an armed force of Mexicans are within ten miles of this city and within three miles of our reservoirs,” while “opposing them are only one hundred state troops. Can you give us any aid?”¹⁰⁷

The top brass of the military acknowledged that “Governor Johnson of California has been in receipt of many telegrams urging more protection for the . . . Imperial Valley water system,” but they simply did not have enough people to meet the need.¹⁰⁸ In a sense, the border was artificial. The “critical conditions” obtaining in the Imperial Valley grew “out of the fact that their entire water supply is furnished through water works located in Mexico,” and “in constant danger.” The state’s senator wanted to “send some of the National Guards of California to protect its own border rather than send them all to Texas,” thus pointing to the regional tensions being engendered by the Revolution.¹⁰⁹

After receiving many, “many telegrams from conservative leading and substantial citizens of Imperial Valley urging more protection,” Governor Johnson went to “investigate personally.” He found that the “attitude of common Mexicans including soldiers of garrison is quite hostile” and that the “water system . . . is exceedingly vulnerable.” There were “fifty thousand people and seventy-five millions of property at [the] mercy of marauding bands.” Unless “additional troops” were sent “at once,” “this valley will become desert[,] stock will die[,] people will leave.”¹¹⁰

But U.S. forces were stretched thin along the two-thousand-mile border, other troops were keeping a wary eye on war in Europe, and still

others were concerned about recalcitrant Native Americans, widespread reluctance on the part of “Anglos” to join the National Guard, and bigotry against Negroes and “Spanish Americans” hampering military recruitment. In June 1916, as Negro troops were being dispatched southward in pursuit of Pancho Villa, the president of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce told the governor about “alarming reports . . . from the Mayor of Calexico stating that six hundred armed Mexican troops are at Mexicali.” He reminded Johnson that “Southern California has many Mexicans,” and fretted about a “Mexican uprising” unless “machine guns and other necessary equipment is supplied.”¹¹¹ Milbank Johnson, president of United Mines, “located in Imperial County . . . ten miles from the border,” said that everything was in “danger of destruction by the excited Mexicans” nearby. Although he thought “fifty soldiers could straighten matters in [a] short time,” “haste” was “absolutely essential.”¹¹²

CHAPTER 7

Negroes Invade Mexico

The United States was in a bind: there was unrest along the border and the nation was being drawn toward war in Europe, yet there was stiff resistance to increasing the number of Negro troopers to meet the crisis, even under the prevailing system of segregated regiments. And, in any case, many Negroes were reluctant to join the military. Ernest D. Nielsen, a Mormon colonist in Mexico, was under siege, as were his coreligionists. Musing about the supposed Native American “hatred against the white man,” he reflected, “You take the Negro. I’ve had some of them as pretty good friends, but I just [cannot] get right down [and] wallow in the same trough with him, would . . . you?”¹

The U.S. residents of Mexico that Negro troopers would be compelled to protect were unenlightened and generally agreed with Nielsen. Early in 1913 they wrote to President Wilson, “Suppose a wealthy white man in Alabama had started arming the Negroes a few years after the War, offering each a pure democracy, 40 acres and a mule, if they would make him governor. How long would the intelligent whites hesitate in stringing him to the nearest telegraph pole, especially if the Negroes there outnumbered the whites, three to one? And if, suppose conditions were such that he succeeded, he sat supine in his gubernatorial chair, while his black cohorts kept on robbing farm houses, outraging women. . . . How long would the

vigilance committee of southern gentlemen postpone his lynching? This is an exact parallel to conditions here." "Is there a white woman in the south," they asked, "who did not approve of the legal doings of the Ku Klux Klan?"²

Yet it would be the Negro who would be dispatched to Mexico to rescue the likes of Nielsen and the blunt letter-writers. Their casual bigotry toward the Negro was breathtaking in light of their dependence on him. In 1918 *Stars and Stripes*, a paper directed at soldiers, carried a caricature of "the three dusketeers," that is, Negro soldiers with picks and shovels speaking in an incomprehensible dialect and calling themselves "nigguhs."³ The budding socialist Upton Sinclair found this image so striking he retained a copy for his files. During the U.S. intervention in Mexico, John Reed, Sinclair's fellow leftist, the "romantic revolutionary," met a "huge man" named "Mac" who "had worked all over the U.S. and Mexico at everything from railroading to cowpunching" but seemed to relish most "the joys of 'hunting niggers' in Georgia."⁴

For the celebrated George Patton, who was familiar with the capabilities of Negro troopers, "the word 'nigger' [was] an integral part of [his] vocabulary" and he was perpetually "disdaining" them.⁵ This intense disregard for the well-being and rights of Negroes grated on black soldiers, making them unenthusiastic about defending the United States.

In some parts of the country, black soldiers were "routinely kicked and beaten by white officers and noncoms." Camp conditions were "atrocious" with "poor sanitation" and "unhealthy conditions," not to mention "polluted water, no place to wash or bathe and infestations of bedbugs . . . filth [and] not enough food." They were treated "like convicts on a chain gang by being forced to labor on the public roads under the watch of white officers and noncoms." In some places they were "worked like slaves[,] supervised by white noncommissioned officers who carried pistols, wielded whips and kicked those who were not sufficiently compliant."⁶ Private George Canada, writing from Camp McArthur in Waco, told Secretary of War Newton Baker directly that they "treat us like dogs; if we are sick we have to work or go to the guard house, [they] curse and abuse us [and] call us nigger. . . . [We] work under guns just like we are convicts, work in the sleet and cold."⁷ Their treatment by their own country was so bad that even Germany thought it could "subvert the black 9th and 10th cavalry stationed in Arizona, inducing the troopers to mutiny" in the run-up to the U.S. entry into World War I.⁸

Understandably, a number of Negroes decided to cross the line and fight alongside Mexicans. In the early stages of the revolutionary process, Clarence Harris of San Diego recalled seeing Negroes fighting a fierce battle in "Tijuana"—Baja California. This now sprawling metropolis was then "just a little town . . . some people, maybe they were citizens or a few soldiers of Tijuana, I don't know, put up a fight and it lasted quite a while. It started early in the morning and it was over about three o'clock in the afternoon. . . . We sat on a hill just about where the gate going into Tijuana is now. . . . The bullets were whizzing by."⁹ James Russell Johnson recalled seeing a "Chinaman in the bunch. He had been a restaurant owner." There were "mostly whites," he said, though "it seems like I remember there being [a] colored person or two that showed up. . . . They were just like a bunch of old hayseeds that went down there with their blue jeans and their levis and shirts with gun belts strapped on them."¹⁰

These Negroes were likely part of an IWW detachment involved in the early stages of the Revolution. Carl M. Eichenlaub later recalled this "Communist-anarchist group . . . who hated anything that looked like (folks) who had more than 15 [cents] in their pockets. . . . They were a very disgruntled group of people . . . a ruthless, worthless bunch of men."¹¹ Many were attracted to the anarchist philosophy of the Mexican insurgents led by Ricardo Flores Magon, who advocated the then subversive notion of "social equality." The insurgency began in January 1911, Tijuana being captured in May in a battle that lasted about sixteen hours and resulted in thirty-two dead and twenty-four wounded.¹² Flores Magon also struck a chord when he tried to forge an alliance with the Yaquis, the Native American group that had been oppressed by all sides.¹³

Dudley Robinson, Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of California, later told the U.S. Senate that there was a "body of men, consisting of whites and Negroes, many of them Industrial Workers of the World," who "formed a separate battalion" in Baja California. One of the purposes of this venture was "to establish a center for some sort of a revolution" on both sides of the border. They sought to spark a "general uprising of the unemployed and laboring classes of the United States, or else they would make their own sally into Lower California and there establish a separate government of their own."¹⁴

The Mexican authorities also noticed African Americans drifting across the border. As Baja California remained under assault, they were tracking the "Negro-Farrel" whose first name was Horace, and who was said to

have been involved in warfare south of the border.¹⁵ In the summer of 1913 the Mexican Consul in Marfa, Texas, was informed that their "agent" had "followed the ammunition . . . to Alpine. I located one thousand thirty cartridges and eighteen cases of shot gun pellets . . . a Negro by the name of Munro Payne crossed a six mule team of supplies between Boquillos y Lijitis about July the 1st."¹⁶

Henry O. Flipper said in 1914 that he had "been very, very careful not to mix in any way in the troubles of Mexico. I am too anxious to return to Mexico to make enemies of Mexicans on either side of the controversy and far too anxious for a successful [conclusion] to my Army affair to say or do anything to which the Administration or any of its participants or friends might take exception." But this did not prevent him from calling the followers of Pancho Villa "hyenas, these vultures of humanity."¹⁷ Nor did it prevent him from letting it be known that a number of U.S. Negroes were involved in the "troubles of Mexico." Yes, he confirmed, "there was a Negro lieutenant in Huerta's army at Juarez. He had never been an American soldier but was a fugitive from justice and is now in the Texas Penitentiary, where he belongs. There was a major in Villa's army, a colored man who previously kept a hotel at Torreon, a very fine man, but he is now at his home in the United States. There was also a Negro in [Governor Jose Maria] Maytorena's army in Sonora who operated a machine gun. It was said he was a deserter but this was later denied."¹⁸ The NAACP reported with apparent pride that "a colored man commanded the detachment of Mexican troops which shot an American immigration officer at Juarez, across the Rio Grande from El Paso."¹⁹ According to the *New York Sun*, "Americans who have deserted from some of the regiments on the border are commanding companies of Mexican troops, according to Negro troopers of the Tenth Cavalry who were captured at Carrizal," Mexico. "William Givens, a private in Troop K . . . says he recognized a former private of the Twentieth Infantry in command of a detachment of the Mexican troops in the Carrizal fight. After the battle the prisoners were put in [the] charge of the company commanded by this American. . . . The American admitted that he had deserted at Columbus," New Mexico, when queried by Givens. "Givens said he heard of other American soldiers with the Carranza forces."²⁰

Indeed, contemporaneous accounts speak of numerous Negro deserters in Mexico.²¹ Later, Negro troopers blamed "[William] Ryan of the Twentieth—now a Mexican Lieutenant Colonel" and a "deserter"—for the "Carrizal disaster." It was he, they said, who had "operated the machine

gun at Carrizal” that mowed down U.S. troops and contributed to the defeat of the Buffalo Soldiers. “Survivors said they hoped to live long enough to obtain revenge. Ryan’s promotion” in the Mexican military was “understood to have been the result of [his] efficiency at Carrizal.”²² The army of the Mexican rebel Flores Magon in Baja California included a “valuable scouting force composed mainly of Cocopah Indians.” His forces also included a “Negro,” “Lieutenant Roberts.”²³

Louis Hostetter, U.S. consul in Hermosillo, Sonora noted in 1916 that “there are only two [Yaqui] chiefs who have not come in, Subalaume and a Negro or rather a man supposed to be a Negro, who has great influence with the Yaquis are the two remaining out.”²⁴ Then he mentioned “a Negro by the name of Magoon, who is with the outlaw Yaquis” and “is trying to influence the Yaquis to raid Douglas, Arizona. He has considerable influence over the Indians. . . . This Negro is supposed to be a deserter from the U.S. Army and [from] Jamaica.”²⁵

But it was difficult for observers to distinguish a U.S. “colored man” from one from another nation or from Mexico itself, for that matter. Thus, Hostetter, the U.S. consul, later said that the man he had initially identified was “not a [U.S.] Negro but a Mexican, who formerly lived in Los Angeles and was an anarchist.”²⁶ Moreover, the Revolution itself attracted exiles from throughout the hemisphere, some of whom had resided in the United States while others had not. One of the Yaqui leaders fomenting discord along the border was reported to be Juan Montano, “a Cuban Negro who is reported to have served at one time in the United States army.”²⁷ Many Africans throughout the hemisphere were driven to join Mexico and inflict damage on the bastion of white supremacy: the United States.

Revolutionaries established a base of operations in neighboring Belize (British Honduras) which had a long history of African slavery and, thus, a substantial population of African descent. Arms and munitions flowed into Belize from Mexico.²⁸ Individuals such as Richard Denton sent in some as well.²⁹ He was arrested and accused of organizing sedition in Campeche, Quintana Roo, and the Yucatan.³⁰ The Mexican consul in the British colony complained of the frequent commission of illegal acts in Belize, in violation of the laws of neutrality.³¹ The British authorities for their part complained of the “activity of Mexican agitators” in their colony,³² which pointed to the widening impact of the Revolution.

Like moths to a flame, the Revolution attracted a broad range of characters—including filibusters—from across the world.³³ Among these were

some who could be termed "African Americans," in the sense that they were from South Africa, though they were notorious for their lack of sympathy for the indigenous habitants of that troubled continent. Many of them had fought in the so-called "Boer War," the Afrikaners' conflict with the British in South Africa at the turn of the century. Caryl Ap Rhys Price had fought in India on behalf of the Empire.³⁴ The Mexican consul in Douglas, Arizona, noted a visit by the mayor "accompanied" by an "individual of South African origin," who spoke "good Spanish."³⁵

But the central figure in this crowd of foreigners was Benjamin Viljoen. He was an Afrikaner who rose to prominence on account of his association with the Los Angeles publishing mogul Harry Chandler, who owned a ranch in "the Imperial Valley town of Mexicali." As cross-border raids commenced in January 1911, Chandler "found that he and his father-in-law were hated there almost as much as Porfirio Diaz." Chandler and his in-law, General Harrison Otis, "immediately dashed off a letter to President William Howard Taft pitching for U.S. military protection," warning that the "Magonistas' ultimate scheme is to establish a socialistic republic in Lower California, cutting loose from the United States and Mexico and attempting to set up a Socialistic heaven of their own." Just then the Mexican government sent an "expeditionary detachment" to the region, "headed by a military advisor named [Benjamin] Viljoen" to investigate. He "had a close look at a sprawling green oasis in the middle of the desert unlike any that had seen farther south of the border. He quit [Mexico's] army and hired on," that is, began to work for, Chandler and Otis. Later he was implicated in a plot to invade Baja California to take it over and have it secede from Mexico.³⁶

Benjamin Viljoen had been a general—"second in command of the armed forces of the Traansvaal Republic during the Boer War"—before moving to North America. Ultimately he became a major rancher and landowner in New Mexico, a leader of the Republican Party, and an anti-Yaqui crusader. This last role seemed particularly appropriate given his lack of sympathy for the indigenous people of Africa. He chose to lobby for statehood for New Mexico and seemed to bounce back and forth between leading roles in this state and its southern neighbor.³⁷ He was part of the large-scale Afrikaner migration to Argentina, East Africa, and the borderlands.³⁸

Viljoen had also been a Mexican diplomat in Europe. But suddenly in 1912, as New Mexico was joining the Union, he reported that "since my arrival here my health has become so alarmingly bad that the attending

physician . . . has ordered me to leave Breslau at once." He also demanded a "special allowance" since he was "almost entirely without funds."³⁹ He had survived a "serious operation," he said, "which came near costing my life."⁴⁰ His Mexican interlocutors were puzzled by the "irregularity" of his departure, though they sent him the money.⁴¹ The next thing they knew he was in La Mesa, New Mexico, and his physician was saying that he was suffering from "aggravated bronchitis and asthma . . . nervous collapse . . . violent paroxysm [and] stomach complications." However, his medical problems did not prevent him from using his intimate knowledge of Mexico on behalf of the robber barons of Los Angeles. Mexico, which had been so harsh toward the Yaquis—and, in fact, had enlisted Viljoen in this vile campaign—naïvely embraced him before discovering in 1916 that he had "donated to the government of the United States seven maps" pertaining to northern Mexico, detailed and sensitive documents "made by engineers of the Mexican army."⁴²

But Mexico had its own spies. Via its numerous consulates, "agents,"⁴³ "operatives,"⁴⁴ and other sources of intelligence, the Mexican authorities kept a close eye on developments in the United States, including troop movements in Fort Huachuca, Arizona, a prime site for the Buffalo Soldiers.⁴⁵ A "secret agent of the Mexican Consulate in El Paso" knew what the Negro troopers probably didn't—that Pancho Villa, who they were chasing through northern Mexico, was being ably assisted by "el Americano Charles P. Hunt."⁴⁶ Another "Villa spy" was Tandy Samford, "one of two brothers who made their homes in Columbus, N.M." who were "arrested" and "alleged to have given information to Villa during the Columbus raid."⁴⁷ In the so-called "Villa saddle bag documents," evidence was discovered that "some of the business firms on our side of the border . . . transacted business with Villa or his agents."⁴⁸ Ben Turner, another U.S. citizen—and he was not the only one—fought alongside Villa.⁴⁹

One Mexican operative in Washington had penetrated the critically important "War College" and obtained sensitive "information" "by virtue of friendship with an official of the [U.S.] military, a good friend" (who understandably preferred to remain anonymous) that could be helpful in Mexico's confrontation with the Buffalo Soldiers.⁵⁰ Of course, these Euro-Americans working on behalf of Mexico enjoyed more rights than the Negroes who were risking life and limb to defend the United States.

Euro-American agents were not the only ones conspiring directly against the Negro troopers. The chief operating officer of the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railway confessed in 1916 that "because of the large

Mexican population particularly in Texas in territory through which our troop trains must pass, the release of information to individuals or the press concerning troop movements by our employees has been prohibited." Hence, the "government [was] considering a censorship of news of this character," although it was difficult to hide a brigade of dark-skinned men in blue in a vast land where they were rare.⁵¹ When these Negro troopers took "white prisoners" from Fort Huachuca to Fort Leavenworth, "the trip"—according to Sergeant Thomas Jordan—"was pleasant while in [New] Mexico but when the troopers with their prisoners reached Texas . . . where Southern whites were lined up, they questioned why colored soldiers should be detailed to transfer white prisoners."⁵² Yet these troopers were invading Mexico on behalf of "southern whites."

Further, the Mexican consul in Laredo, Texas, told the U.S. marshal there in 1911 that "it is a matter of common notoriety that the constabulary of Webb County and a large party of the city police are in sympathy with those preparing an uprising in Mexico. . . . Some of the principal peace officers of the county and city are actively espousing and assisting those who are attempting to subvert the peace of my country."⁵³ That same year the Mexican consul in Calexico, California (as anarchists and Negroes were embroiled in warfare just across the border) concluded that there were "three hundred" in revolt, "the majority" being "Americans."⁵⁴ Later, after the Revolution had moved in a more radical direction, the U.S. revolutionary left—which included the African Blood Brotherhood—was hailed by the Mexican consul in New York for its "energetic campaign in favor" of his nation.⁵⁵

Mexicans were considerably less complimentary about the Buffalo Soldiers. Many of the Negro troopers were stationed in Fort Huachuca, Arizona, one of the "few military posts . . . not named for a person. Traditionally, Huachuca is a Hohokam Indian word for thunder, lightning, wind, or rain."⁵⁶ The Negro troopers of this fort, who were as powerful as a force of nature, had proved their mettle when they helped bring about the surrender of the heroic Geronimo in 1886. They were involved in hostilities with the sadly forgotten "Apache Kid," who "conducted a one-man reign of terror into the 1900s." Ironically, "the Kid" had once been a "member of the Indian Scout detachment" before relinquishing "his career with the Army to avenge the murder of one of his kinsmen."⁵⁷ When the new state of Arizona was born in 1912, Fort Huachuca was allocated "full regimental" status "as a result of the unsettled conditions" then prevalent across the border. Neither Washington nor Phoenix wanted to have "to resort to the

expensive expedient of rushing troops” to the border “from remote army posts upon the” continuing and escalating “occasion of border alarms.”⁵⁸ Months before statehood was proclaimed, President Taft “ordered a massive mobilization of Army and Navy units near the Mexican border. Approximately 20,000 soldiers, or one quarter of the United States Army, assembled near the boundary.” This suggests what a large role both Mexicans and Negroes had in shaping the contours of this nascent superpower.⁵⁹

In addition to Fort Huachuca, there was a sizable contingent of Negro troopers near Columbus, New Mexico, a site sacked by Pancho Villa’s band in 1916. There was one Negro residing in Columbus in 1910, and 480 in 1920, for Negroes flocked to the reflected and protective aura of the Buffalo Soldiers. “At its height the black community in Columbus was probably the single largest sustained black military community that ever existed in the West up to that time.” Theirs was a swaggering, often insolent presence, quite extraordinary for Negroes anywhere on the continent. “The fear of black troops was a major factor leading to their silent toleration in Columbus.” The “intimidated locals” remembered Brownsville in 1906 and Houston in 1917, and the damage that enraged Negroes with rifles could inflict, “enabling the regiment to dominate the town.” “Some of the ‘better class’ of whites” “lived in constant fear of the black soldiers,” finding it difficult to understand why their “race” and class did not confer on them the same privileges as they did on other whites nationally. Although they had “bitter feelings” about Villa and his crew, they often seemed “less concerned about the large Mexican community, than they were about the presence of a large number of black soldiers and black camp followers.” One black soldier mused that “what the colored race has done” in the military meant “they were going to rule the world.” His sense of confidence was understandable, given that these Negro soldiers routinely defied racist convention. In the spring of 1920, for example, a “letter threatened bombings and a bomb indeed exploded in an incinerator” of a company suspected of ill will to the Negroes. A black soldier was “arrested at noon” but “walked out of the guardhouse by four o’clock, evidently . . . because his guards had released him.”⁶⁰

As if this were not bad enough, Negro troopers in the borderlands freely committed the ultimate sin, what had ambushed Flipper and Jack Johnson alike. “Red light districts mushroomed . . . with startling alacrity along the border,” though a “number of establishments maintained a rigid color line and would not admit Negroes as patrons or would restrict them to a particular area within the house.” But “others, the majority, were

completely integrated, the profit motive" overriding "racial" characteristics. So while Negroes due east of El Paso were being lynched for merely smiling "inappropriately" at white women, black troopers due west of it enjoyed sexual access across the color line, while white men looked on. Akin to this social violation were the boxing matches along the border. Following in Jack Johnson's footsteps, "Negro troopers in particular [demonstrated] tremendous fighting prowess."⁶¹

When Columbus postmaster L. L. Burkhead found an NAACP leaflet in the street, "he quickly forwarded it to Postmaster General Albert Sidney Burleson, a Texan," who was more nervous than many of his compatriots since he had to "dodge allegations that the plantations he owned exploited black convict labor. Burkhead, near panic, related that two additional battalions from the 24th were soon to depart Arizona to join their comrades in Columbus, where they would outnumber white soldiers five to one. With Villa's raid and the Houston mutiny fresh in everyone's memory, Burkhead reported that the possibility of 'something worse' was making local whites decidedly nervous."⁶²

The *New York Times*, on the other hand, was impressed by the presence of these Columbus soldiers and the "bizarre collection of gay colored bandanas that was to be seen about their necks," which "they had picked up in the Philippines." They "tell you with particular pride," said the *Times*, "that theirs is the only regiment in the United States at the present time that is recruited up to full war strength—150 men to the company, four companies to the battalion." Moreover, "it is said that 75 percent of them re-enlist. They like it" in New Mexico, "black troops call Columbus paradise." This was not surprising, since they enjoyed privileges that many other Negroes could not even envisage.⁶³

The reporter of the competing *New York Sun*, on the other hand, seemed stunned by his encounter with black soldiers. The *Sun's* headlines ran: "Negro troops attack Texas Rangers' home," "rioting at Del Rio follows shooting of Colored Soldier." "Serious trouble has developed," it said, for "a large number of Negro soldiers of the Twenty-fourth infantry surrounded the Rangers' house, firing volleys of shots."⁶⁴

Negro soldiers here were said to be "trying to break in . . . [a] house of ill repute," which led to an altercation and the shooting of a Negro. Aroused, they "gathered their numbers into a line formed about two hundred yards from the house." The manager of the threatened brothel responded by calling "army officials and requested that they immediately

send White Guards. I told them particularly to send White Guards," he emphasized. The Rangers arrived and a wild fracas followed.

Earlier, "several citizens of Del Rio had been insulted by the Negro guards on the main streets and the Negroes were in a rather riotous nature that night. At one particular house of ill-repute the Negroes had taken a white girl and tried to rape her." "From sunset until the shooting commenced the Negroes had been indulging in drinking, loud talking and cursing." And it was not over yet. "We have a number of rumors of what these Negroes have said they were going to do to the town," local officials reported nervously.⁶⁵ This episode illustrated the inherent problem of relying on Negro troopers in a land where they were third-class citizens. Would friction not ensue when they sought to exert their male privilege, an inevitable aspect of soldiering and the system they were sworn to uphold? Who would "police the police" when there was friction? Was such an arrangement unsustainable in the long term?

Besides cheeky Negroes with big weapons, Columbus had to contend with domestic radicals such as the IWW. An attorney in nearby Deming, New Mexico, was "alarmed" about these "undesirable citizens . . . we certainly do not want them to remain in our County," since "these men outnumber the citizens of Columbus."⁶⁶

One has to ask why "colored men" in Columbus, New Mexico, were able to assert themselves at a time when elsewhere Negroes could be shot dead for offenses as trivial as frowning. One explanation is that they were soldiers in the middle of nowhere at low pay, facing militant Mexicans, a prospect that did not attract many in the United States. As the veteran Carl Johnson put it, "There was really no incentive for serving in the U.S. Army at that unless swayed by the spirit of adventure," since "the army was paying a private \$15.00 per month, a corporal \$21.00."⁶⁷ Moreover, as the Revolution progressed, sniping among the U.S. political leadership increased accordingly, which complicated its ability to move in a concerted fashion either externally or internally. An aide to Senator Albert Fall of New Mexico (soon to be embroiled in the scandals known as "Teapot Dome") was told by an aide who didn't "want to appear as an alarmist," that other powerful men wanted to "weaken the work" of the Senator. There was a lot of finger-pointing going on in the hallways of power regarding who was responsible for the massive security and financial breach along the border that had left the nation at the mercy of either Mexicans or Negroes. In his investigation of U.S. activity in Mexico, "the greatest

part of the evidence [Fall's] committee was getting came through the Oil interests." Some people intended to "ruin Senator Fall politically," while "several Oil men and others were very liable to be arrested" in retaliation.⁶⁸

Matters got worse. Allegedly a "plan [was] on foot [*sic*] [for agents from Mexico City] to bump [off] Senator Fall." "Keep a good eye on any Mexicans that get near to Fall," advised a report. But how was this to be done in a state like New Mexico where Mexicans were everywhere? Texas's adjutant general, the source for these stories, was "sure that this [allegation was] the absolute truth . . . the straight dope," and "a real one" besides.⁶⁹ Other reports asserted that both the adjutant general and Senator Fall were the subject of "plans of Mexican officials in the United States to cause [their] assassination."⁷⁰ In light of such threats, the New Mexican authorities could be excused for not cracking down on rebellious Negro soldiers in Columbus, the sturdy shield protecting them from Mexico.

In addition, there were other threats elsewhere. During this time, for example, Naco, Arizona, was "raked constantly by fire from every type of weapon" from belligerents in Mexico, as "the battle of Naco lasted two months."⁷¹ Neighboring Nogales was like a war zone. A "severe pitched battle was fought by troops from Fort Huachuca stationed in Nogales against Mexicans entrenched in the houses in their section of the border city."⁷² Supposedly "bandits," they were "in reality Mexican government troops with a pretty liberal sprinkling of armed citizens. The fight had been a severe one, two officers, three enlisted men, and two civilians killed, and two officers and twenty-nine enlisted men wounded on the American side, and 129 killed and about 300 wounded on the Mexican side."⁷³

After the repeated complaints and murders of U.S. citizens and sacking of their investments south of the border and within the United States itself, in 1914 the U.S. government sent troops to invade Mexico. This occurred after U.S. sailors were arrested in Tampico, near the rich oilfields. With a touch of pride the NAACP noted that "twenty colored men, none more than twenty years of age, landed with the battalion of Blue Jackets from the United States warships and fought unceasingly at the recent taking of Vera Cruz," with "one . . . slightly injured."⁷⁴

This step was taken with trepidation. In a "strictly confidential" message to the U.S. secretary of state, an official argued that "a successful intervention in Mexico will require from two to three hundred thousand soldiers,"⁷⁵ which was well beyond what the army could supply. But, it was



These African American soldiers were taken prisoner by Mexico after they invaded it at the U.S. government's behest during the era of the Revolution. After Pancho Villa's attack on Columbus, New Mexico—perhaps the most devastating assault on the U.S. mainland before 11 September 2001—these “Negro” troops were among those dispatched south of the border in the so-called “Punitive Expedition.” Courtesy New Mexico State University.

thought, the United States had no choice but to respond to the “bandit outrages & hold-ups,” not only “throughout the [strategic] Tampico oil fields” but all along the border as well.⁷⁶ Elmer E. Studley, an influential New Mexico attorney, told the governor in 1914, “our troops are now crossing the Rio Grande and . . . our war ships are shelling Vera Cruz. This is War!”⁷⁷ Perhaps this enthusiasm for war was influenced by the fact that many Negro troopers would be dodging bullets.

Nevertheless, this intervention was relatively minor for Negroes compared to their chasing Pancho Villa through northern Mexico in 1916 after he sacked Columbus, New Mexico, killing fifteen and wounding thirteen. Buffalo Soldiers were the chief defenders of this isolated outpost. The legendary Negro soldier Colonel Charles Young, one of the few of his “race” to hold such a high post, led the fifteen thousand troops in a “charge at Agua Caliente” across the border. This was “the first time that American troops had attacked with the support of overhead machine gun fire.”⁷⁸

This "Punitive Expedition," as it was called, was "similar to operations against Native Americans"—a specialty of Negro troopers. "It was the first campaign, however, to employ motorized devices like trucks, motorcycles, tanks and airplanes" and in that sense was a turning point in military history.⁷⁹ Moreover, because this intervention occurred right as motion pictures were becoming popular, it was among "the first"—along with the equally epochal Russo-Japanese War a few years earlier—"to bring actual warfare before the eyes of the public," thus deeply affecting the popular perception and acceptance of war. Some of the footage "consisted almost entirely of highly imaginative and grandly staged theatrical reenactment," which added to the perceived heroism of the combatants on all sides.⁸⁰

For the Buffalo Soldiers themselves, this invasion provided a dubious "first" all its own in that it was reputedly "the only defeat [the 10th Cavalry] ever suffered in the field." The ninety outmanned, outgunned Negroes faced four hundred crack Mexican troops. The Buffalo Soldiers' "charge at Carrizal could have touched off an all-out war between Mexico and the United States," which would have been nothing short of disastrous for the latter, given its impending entry into the European war.⁸¹

The nation's overreliance on Negro troopers had presented Washington with a severe crisis, leaving it with often callow and soft National Guardsmen. In the late spring of 1916, the United States "assembled on the southern border of the United States facing Mexico . . . 160,000 fully armed volunteers" and "from these . . . troops came the cadres for the World War I field army of the United States." Their Mexican experience came in useful in the European countryside; but this also meant that some of the nation's most war-tested troops, that is, Negroes, were among the most persecuted.⁸² In addition to the fear of "national militarism, which the Continental Army suggested to many Congressmen," Dixiecrats "feared the possibility that a President not in sympathy with Southern racial policy might go so far as to enlist Negroes in the federal reserve." Thus, they favored relying on state militias.⁸³ Yet this too weakened national security, suggesting that Dixiecrats favored white supremacy more than life itself.

Villa, adept at public relations, quickly captured the imagination of the Negroes, though Negro troopers were in the vanguard of those seeking to capture him. "The curly-black haired 'Negroid bandit' Francisco 'Pancho' Villa came from peasant roots in a valley with generations of pardo and Indian Villas, and was, no doubt, part African, as well as Indian and Basque."⁸⁴ Some Negro newspapers portrayed the picturesque Villa as a

“race avenger,” exacting his revenge on those who had betrayed the victims of white supremacy. According to the Negro-owned, Los Angeles-based *California Eagle*, Villa proclaimed, “hereafter when you meet a Chinaman, respect him; when you meet a Negro or Japanese respect them; respect burros; wherever and whenever you encounter a gringo,” on the other hand, punishment was appropriate, if not obligatory.⁸⁵ Though Villa was widely viewed as a loathsome terrorist by Euro-America, the popular Negro performer, Bert Williams, incorporated impressions of him in his act.⁸⁶ For his part, Villa, whose troops included a number of Yaquis with grievances against both Washington and Mexico City, is said to have declared before attacking Columbus (which Negroes were defending) that the “Negroes are all ready to side with us.”⁸⁷

Just before the Columbus raid and the U.S. invasion of 1916, Villa had looted a Chihuahua ranch belonging to a Yankee, murdered an employee and the proprietor, and taken the latter’s wife prisoner, along with Buck Spencer, a Negro employee. Addressing them all, Villa “made a long and impassioned speech to his followers informing them of all the wrongs they had suffered at the hands of Americans and exhorted them to loot and burn and kill every man, woman and child in Columbus.” Buck Spencer, who was eventually freed along with the imprisoned wife, “gave a long statement afterwards on this tirade” but evinced no evident sympathy toward Villa.⁸⁸

In addition to Spencer, when Columbus was raided, the “family servant” of the “Castleman family . . . a Negro named Carson Jackson, successfully had wormed his way under the bathtub, no small accomplishment” as the house “was riddled by bullets.” Neither he nor Spencer, it appears, felt compelled to put himself in harm’s way to protect his patrons.⁸⁹

Villa had reason to believe that the first line of defense across the border was weakened by “racially” based dissatisfaction. He may well have been right. George Hammons, a former sergeant in the Buffalo Soldiers, recalled later, well after he had started a “fuel business,” a fierce “border skirmish against some of Pancho Villa’s men. . . . We got one of their men, I think,” he recollected. “Then we turned back and stopped chasing them. . . . Anyway, we didn’t feel like it was our war. We had to go along for the ride, you know.”⁹⁰

Even detractors of the Negro troopers may have agreed that these soldiers were demoralized during the two-hour debacle of a firefight at Carizal, Mexico.⁹¹ The commander of Troop C of the 10th Cavalry was the feckless white officer Captain Charles Boyd. An 1892 graduate of West

Point, he had served in the Spanish-American war and in the Philippines. "He frequently told his veteran black troopers [that] each of you is equal to ten Mexicans." Such chauvinism led him to deliberately ignore General Pershing's orders. "We're going to ride through Carrizal," he told them, though he realized that it was "a narrow street bordered by adobe walls . . . a perfect trap." Like shooting porgies in a pipeline, the Mexicans began to massacre the men with a hail of fire.

A mounted Mexican courier had ridden out to Boyd to invite him to confer with the Mexicans about his precarious position. He refused. "God damn you—I'm going through your god-damned town," he responded. As he saw it, you were promoted by "fighting, not by waiting." But "after more than an hour of fighting against overwhelming odds the American attack collapsed." General Pershing was mortified upon receiving the news, and his black comrade, Colonel Young, thirsted for revenge. Instead, cognizant of its exposed position in Europe and on the border, a chastened Washington entered into "negotiations."⁹² But as a Wisconsin veteran put it years later, "the [few] short months between this Mexican Campaign, and the declaration of World War #1 has dwarfed the Emergency Campaign to a nonentity," yet "were it not for the Mexican Border Veteran and his training, World War #1 may have had a different ending."⁹³ Indeed, the border conflict was a dress rehearsal for the United States's entry into the war in Europe, helping to toughen otherwise inexperienced militia.

The Negro troopers hardly required more toughening, though the Mexican environment was unforgiving. Chihuahua contains some of the driest deserts in the world. Inhabited by rattlesnakes and mesquite brush, it is inhospitable to human life.⁹⁴ The severe heat of the sand during the day and the equally severe cold at night tested the Negro troops sorely.⁹⁵ They buried themselves in the ground and covered their bodies with earth to keep warm in the mountains.⁹⁶ One soldier complained that the heat had so blistered his face that it resembled a boiled lobster. When the horses' hooves hit the ground the alkaline dust created a veritable windstorm. Some soldiers shot themselves rather than proceed. The residents of northern Mexico were loathe to cooperate with the invaders, which further hampered their progress. Negro soldiers got by on starvation rations of potatoes, coffee, and hardtack and began to supplement their meager diet by stealing Mexican cattle for beef and grinding down their horses' corn for meal, further befouling their—and the locals'—mood. With "6,000 horses requiring 144,000 pounds of forage a day"—and soldiers

pinching their feed—soon the animals became bad tempered too. “Going into Chihuahua to [catch] Villas was like the Sheriff of Nottingham entering Sherwood Forest expecting the peasants to help him hang Robin Hood,” quipped an observer.⁹⁷

Water was the one commodity that the soldiers “most miss[ed] in Mexico.”⁹⁸ Bathing became a distant memory, making alkaline dust a second skin, to the point where many Negroes seemed to be turning white. In fact, the unspeakably harsh conditions may help to explain why all the overwhelmingly Negro battalions of the 24th infantry but one were slated for Mexico. The one exception served as backup along the border.⁹⁹

The invasion of Mexico was a logistical challenge and for the United States a nightmare. Horses were going lame from marching through deep sand and on mountains.¹⁰⁰ Replacing mules with trucks led to a rush for, then a shortage of, gasoline.¹⁰¹ The shortage of drivers led the army to recruit all available chauffeurs in El Paso.¹⁰² General Pershing wanted more aviators, but the new technology had not thrown up a sufficient number of trained men.¹⁰³

Despite these hardships, the Negro troopers persevered—perhaps overly so. As early as January 1916 Mexican officials complained bitterly about the “reported killing, on Mexican soil, of Tobias Barrio, a Mexican citizen, by three colored soldiers belonging to General Pershing’s Command.”¹⁰⁴ They were tried and convicted for manslaughter and packed off to Leavenworth but the Mexican authorities remained displeased. Negro troopers in San Geronimo, Chihuahua, were reported to have annihilated Villistas.¹⁰⁵

The Mexicans avenged themselves at Carrizal, which proved a catastrophe for the Negroes. Private Wilbert Miller of the Buffalo Soldiers recalled “the firing came first from a machine gun in front of C troop. When we opened fire, the mounted Mexicans in front of us divided, half going to the right and half going to the left. There were dismounted men in trenches behind a line of trees in our front. The firing caused the lead horses to stampede. We galloped for the gate firing at the Mexicans who tried to get there ahead of us. . . . We kept up a running fight with the Mexicans for about five miles but finally shook them off.” He escaped.¹⁰⁶ Others were not as fortunate. As the “scout and interpreter” Lem H. Spilsbury recalled, they were “taken to the town of Carrizal. They took our clothes away from us and shoes and hats, also all jewelry and money. They beat me around with a gun, that is they punched me a good deal and threatened to kill all of us prisoners. . . . They took us around to a little

cuartel and locked us up in a little dark room, about 10' x 20'. . . . Most of the boys were bare-footed and bare-headed and in their underclothes. The first detachment of six prisoners were robbed of everything in the way of outer clothing." They were met by "one thousand [Mexicans] screaming and yelling to kill us all." They were then dragged off to Chihuahua, where again "there was a mob waiting for us, yelling and screaming. . . . They wanted to hang me and burn me at the stake and threatened to rope and drag me. But they did not do anything but throw stones at us." They were "treated fine at the penitentiary" to which they were taken. "The British Consul, Mr. Hunter McKay, came to see us every day. It was clean there with a cement floor and I scrubbed out my cell and it was all right," as "they gave us mostly frijoles and rice." He was lucky, repatriated with "two bullet holes shot through my hat and one through my clothes."¹⁰⁷ Others were not as lucky. At least eight were wounded and thirteen were killed.¹⁰⁸ Another account listed twenty-six dead.¹⁰⁹

After recovering the bodies, Washington concluded that "some of these men were undoubtedly murdered and it is also believed from circumstantial evidence that one other soldier whose body was not found was shot the day after the battle." The U.S. government decided that this "report should not be given to the press,"¹¹⁰ perhaps because it would further inflame a situation that the government was trying to calm down—or, perhaps, because the victims were Negroes whose lives were deemed worthless. Or again, maybe the Mexicans' vengeance against the invaders may have been tinged with "racial" animus. Whatever the case, press reports indicated that wounded U.S. soldiers were shot and bayoneted on the battlefield at Carrizal; the prisoners were tied with ropes which slashed their skin; they were robbed and stoned and threatened, it was said.¹¹¹

Colonel F. X. Cooke of Troop K of the 10th, a survivor of Carrizal, resembled a dead man (barely) walking. Mexican troops found him near Villa Ahumada in Mexico with a broken arm, dying of starvation and thirst, before being turned over to the U.S. authorities in Juarez.¹¹² But U.S. troops were stretched so thin that the Carrizal survivors were sent back to serve in Mexico. Whether Cooke was among them is unclear.¹¹³

In the aftermath of the Carrizal disaster, Negro troopers asked General Pershing if they could march to Chihuahua without their white officers, storm the state prison, and rescue their Negro comrades. When Pershing refused their request, the soldiers held a meeting and spoke of going to rescue their comrades without permission.¹¹⁴ But Mexico had its own complaints, claiming seventy-three casualties of its own at Carrizal.¹¹⁵

After Carrizal the military questioned the judgment of the operation, particularly that of Captain Boyd. One military leader was asked rhetorically, "What eminent 'cavalry expert' has taught the American cavalry that when attacked by a superior force armed with machine guns the proper tactics is to dismount and try to fight back under such unequal conditions. . . . Any officer that has no better judgment than to send a small force 75 miles from his base in a hostile country, without any intervening support within reach, hasn't got sense enough to command anything and ought to be pulled back from command as soon as the orders can reach him."¹¹⁶ Sadly for the Negroes, this opinion was not universal. More typically, the *New York Sun* editorialized that the "tide of battle was about to swing in favor" of the United States "when unfortunately, Captain Boyd [was] . . . killed (by rifle fire). This left the Negro troopers without a leader," and they "lost cohesion" and "team work disappeared." No, Boyd "did not blunder." A "conclusion we would draw from that unhappy reverse: it is that Negro troops to acquit themselves well must be led by white officers always."¹¹⁷

This kind of talk angered Du Bois and the NAACP greatly. Du Bois questioned the casual libeling of the Negro troopers, though he questioned their mission. It was a "foolish venture," he thought. "So in America, in Europe and in Africa black men are fighting for the liberties of white men and pulling their chestnuts out of the fire. One of these bright mornings, black men are going to learn [how] to fight for themselves."¹¹⁸ But, above all, Carrizal was a "blunder, a joke and a crucifixion; a blunder on the part of a President who sent an army on a fool's errand." He found Carrizal to be "a glory for the Mexicans who dared to defend their country from invasion," "and for Negro troopers who [were] sent singing to their death. And the greater glory was the glory of the black men, for Mexicans died for a land they love, while Negroes sang for a country that despises, cheats and lynches them. Even across the sunlit desert as they died came the last wild shriek of a human bon-fire in Texas where Southern 'gentlemen' and 'ladies' capered in glee—brave, filthy Texas. Laugh? Why shouldn't they laugh at simple death and grim duty? . . . Why should they not laugh at death for a country which honors them dying and kicks and buffets them living? God laughed. It was a joke."¹¹⁹

Du Bois was responding to the highly publicized story of the troopers laughing and singing in the face of certain death at Carrizal. "Schoolboys of coming generations," said *The Crisis*, "will read how the troopers faced certain death with smiles on their lips; that they joked with one another,

and burst into song as they fought their last fight against overwhelming odds." This buoyancy in the face of death reflected the true grit—perhaps the sublimation?—of the black experience in the Americas.

Du Bois's sober comments reflected a growing sentiment in the country. W. Ashbie Hawkins of Baltimore was similarly moved. Summing up the crisis facing white supremacy, he declared, "When respectable colored men in this city have difficulty in purchasing or renting homes for themselves and families simply because they are colored, they cannot be easily persuaded to fight to maintain such a condition." With rising passion, he continued, "[No] man, white or black, can love a city, a state or a nation that restrains and hampers his activities on every hand and that endorses and perpetuates race friction by class legislation."

Another mainstream paper reflected the consensus of the press by stating, "It seems a pity . . . to waste good white men in battle with such a foe. The cost of sacrifice would be more nearly equalized were the job assigned to Negro troops. . . . It is a case where prejudice has stood in the way of the welfare of the nation." Still another journal worried that their heroism at Carrizal would give the Negroes leverage at home: this was deemed a "sinister" idea.¹²⁰

Finally, the idea was dawning that it would be problematic for a white supremacist nation to rely upon Negro troopers for national security, particularly along the two-thousand-mile border with Mexico. Though some were "vying with each other in their commendation of the colored soldier," others thought that sending blacks out west was a "good plan to rid the South of the vicious and loafing Negro." Thus, said one southern editorialist, "the white people of our republic are essentially a north temperate zone . . . people of the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic strains . . . it will be pretty hard sledding for this breed of men." Thus, "sending sure-enough Negroes to fight the half-caste bastard breed of Mexico" seemed a neat idea. After all, "the average Negro's feet are stronger and more durable than the underpinning of three ordinary white men put together. . . . The average Negro thrives and lives on the bearing down of sunshine." This writer saw the military as an analogue for a prison, or convict labor, or capital punishment: "Sentence these loiterers and small thieves, between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five, to three to five years in the regular army for Mexican service" and "certainly the South would be the gainer by losing them and the nation a winner by mustering them into service for which they could be ideally fitted." "Well! Well!" clucked Du Bois, "Too proud to fight Germans and too good to fight Mexicans! Will some-

one choose an antagonist worthy of the super-white American?"¹²¹ Others wondered whether deporting Negroes to the border would help alleviate the problem or deepen it.

Acknowledging the reality that Carrizal had unveiled, Du Bois sensed that the Negro's opponents "do not fear that they will not fight—they fear that they WILL fight and fight bravely and well. Just as in Reconstruction days, it was not bad Negro voters they feared but good, intelligent ones."¹²² And, "just as in Reconstruction," the "gains black soldiers achieved from their Mexican service proved temporary and illusory." Yes, the selfless patriotism exhibited by Negro soldiers was used to question the film *Birth of a Nation* and segregation in Washington, D.C., but, in the short term, it was a false dawn.¹²³ Yet "never before had public praise of this magnitude occurred for African-American soldiers."¹²⁴

At least one white southerner was buoyed by the new mood. John W. Campbell of the Tazewell White Lime Works in Virginia was so excited by the performance of Negro troops that he told the Governor, "I want credit for being first to suggest that . . . Virginia this minute pass a law giving colored soldiers a right to vote when they return from the war." Sure, sure, came the governor's noncommittal, decidedly unenthusiastic reply.¹²⁵

But in the long term, more realistic rulers of the United States recognized that profound changes had to be made in the Jim Crow regime lest national security be jeopardized. In Mexico, amid joyous celebrations of their decisive victory over the United States,¹²⁶ intoxicating "rumors circulated in the Carrancista camps that the imprisoned blacks would desert and join the Mexican Army, which in turn might prompt the defection of all blacks serving with Pershing."¹²⁷ This in turn would cripple the United States as it prepared to enter a widening European conflict. This rumor was said to have been floated by Negroes to alleviate mistreatment. Real or not, such rumors could not be ignored.

Charles Young, the celebrated Negro military officer, saw no change in the Jim Crow regime. He had served with distinction in Mexico, yet despite—or perhaps because of—his service,¹²⁸ his detractors wanted to dismiss him from the military. After his "good friend" Du Bois intervened on his behalf, he wrote of a "determined effort on the part of some parties to interfere with my work or spoil my career. I have been warned of detectives being on my track looking for lists of white women with whom I was going."¹²⁹ Undeterred, Du Bois contacted the writer Walter Lippman on Young's behalf: "An attempt is being made to get him out of the army by unfair means. His record has been splendid."¹³⁰

Young was dumbfounded by it all. "Here I sit twirling my thumbs, when other officers are over-worked." After years of hard work on behalf of the United States, he still did not completely understand the machinations of white supremacy, a system which carried the seeds of its own destruction. Young did understand, however, "the bad mental and moral effect this seemingly enforced retirement will have upon our people." Contrary to the claims of his enemies, Young insisted, "I'm not sick, never felt more in condition than at this minute. . . . To work with my own in this war is all I want."¹³¹ He did not get what he wanted. Rebuffed by the military, he turned to the NAACP. "Your [organization] and its interests," he told Du Bois, "are more uppermost in my mind than anything save the interest of my family. I never make a talk of any kind" without counseling "our people to join and cooperate with the association."¹³² This was high praise indeed.

Like Villa, Joe Barrales, who was of Mexican origin, had paid close attention to the anomaly of the U.S. government choosing Negroes as the country's defenders. His uncle, a Villista, had taken part in the raid on Columbus. He recalled later, speaking from Tucson, that the "Punitive Expedition changed a lot of lives. It created a lot of confusion and it showed those people there what the outside world was like. For instance, they never saw black people, until the American army came. All the enlisted were black and the officers were white."

To be certain, there were conflicts between Black and Brown too, though of a bizarre sort. "My grandmother showed me the spot where [General] Pershing had two of his men executed for raping a couple of girls in town. And it was kind of a—it was kind of strange because the people, the people there, pleaded with Pershing not to execute the men because they felt they were not at fault because they were provoked. Being that they were black, people had never seen a black man over there. . . . Two girls wanted to see if the blacks were black all over, 'cause they were bathing in the stream there. And these blacks got the wrong idea and took advantage or nobody really knows whether they took advantage." Because the invading U.S. troops were so conspicuous, their effort to capture Villa was doomed. "They stood out like a sore thumb, you know," said Barrales, "their uniforms, the horses, the trucks, the cars, and most of all the blacks, 'cause they'd never seen black people in Mexico until then. They'd heard about them. Some people didn't believe it, you know, [']Why, you're crazy, there's nobody that can be that color.['] And when they saw them and their hair, you know, and their voice—they had a different voice even

though they spoke English. As a matter of fact, a lot of the soldiers spoke Spanish, some of the blacks spoke Spanish.”¹³³

Barrales’s distinct memories reflect the fact that Carrizal had left a deep imprint on the national consciousness on both sides of the border. Negroes thought the engagement would bolster their effort to obtain full citizenship rights but were severely disillusioned and angered when this did not ensue. In the near term, however, many Negroes were proud of the soldiers’ exploits in Mexico, the withering defeat notwithstanding. Congressman Sydney Mudd of Maryland represented a “district in which there is a large Negro population, and I have many requests for the names of the members of the Tenth Calvary [*sic*] who were killed in the engagement at Carrizal. . . . It seems that many of my colored constituents had friends in this troop.”¹³⁴ Maybe. Also true was that some Negroes were eager to bask in the reflected glory of these latest black casualties in the ongoing struggle to maintain a white supremacist state. Of course, there were other Negroes who were not so inclined.

CHAPTER 8

“Kill the ‘Gringo’ Men!”

“Good Lord!” exclaimed a startled Woodrow Wilson. “Good Lord,” he repeated “two or three times.”¹ This U.S. president was neither beloved nor even “beliked” [*sic*] by many Negro citizens, notably during his years as New Jersey governor and university head. An “open letter” in the NAACP journal, *The Crisis*, observed that a “President of Harvard or Columbia would have known a few black men as men. It is sad that this privilege is denied a President of Princeton, sad for him and his students.”² He carried his deeply felt Jim Crow sympathies to the nation’s capital, thereby earning the enmity of many more. Perhaps this was why he was so stunned when his secretary of state told him about the “Zimmerman Telegram,”³ allegedly about a German-Mexican plot to re-take territory seized by the United States from Mexico in the war of 1846. Because the information came from the British, who were eager to drag the United States into the war against Germany, many people tended to discredit it. Yet some of the president’s closest advisors thought it “genuine.” His secretary of state, Robert Lansing, “vouch[ed]” for it, finding it “authentic.” The “evidence was conclusive,” he insisted. When the German diplomat, Zimmerman, “frankly acknowledged that the message, as printed, was genuine and attempted to justify his sending it,” Lansing reacted with “profound amazement and relief,” in that it confirmed his sus-

picion about the plot.⁴ Indeed, as a leading British Tory acknowledged years later, a central reason for the United States entering the war against Germany was the "thought" that Berlin "might foment trouble on the Mexican border."⁵

The reason Secretary Lansing and President Wilson accepted the veracity of the "Zimmerman Telegram" was possibly an incident that had occurred two years before. For on 20 February 1915 there was to have been a major uprising. "The Plan of San Diego . . . called for Mexicans and Mexican-Americans to rise up against American authorities on the Texas side of the border, to declare their independence from the United States and then to invade the rest of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California and Wyoming. . . . Its other features included a subsequent annexation of six additional states of the Union, these to be turned over to the 'Negroes,' who were expected to form their own independent republic. The Apaches were to be given back their lost lands, and all white American males over age of sixteen were to be killed."⁶ Both Germany and Japan were said to be implicated in the plot, just as they were implicated two years later. No wonder President Wilson was so astounded when told of the "Zimmerman Telegram."⁷

The revolt was said to have been devised in the "small south Texas town of San Diego on January 6, 1915. . . . A provisional directorate, composed of the nine signatories, would provide political leadership, while a Liberating Army of Races and Peoples made up of Mexican-Americans, blacks and Japanese fighting under a red and white flag bearing the legend 'Equality and Independence' would wage implacable warfare" to accomplish its stated goals. Whether the Plan of San Diego was real or a fabrication—as its successor, the Zimmerman Telegram was said to be—has been hotly debated. Yet it is undeniable that "the plan left a legacy of racial tension in south Texas that has endured to the present." Likewise, the "racial" violence in the borderlands during the revolutionary era, convinced many that the "Plan" was not very different from what was already occurring.⁸ Equally significant, both the Plan and the Telegram were said to involve Germany and Japan. Both nations had agents in the United States engaged in espionage during this era.⁹

Certainly the basic idea behind the Plan was not new. In New Mexico in the 1890s "Las Gorras Blancas . . . conducted raids on Anglos who threatened native owned lands near Las Vegas."¹⁰ In 1898 a Mexico City newspaper, calling for Hispanic unity against the United States, proposed an uprising of Negroes and Native Americans. "In June 1916, guerillas

destroyed a series of railroad tracks near Laredo; an editor at Piedras Negras claimed the saboteurs to be Texas-born Mexicans who sought equality for Hispanics, blacks and other dark-skinned races."¹¹ As late as 1919 the much-maligned Yaquis were accused of instigating a plot to unite other Indians, including the Pima, in a crusade to massacre whites and win back lands in the southwest, in a "final stand of the southwestern tribes."¹²

A few years before this, in 1915, the Yankees were fleeing Hermosillo, as the Yaquis were on the warpath.¹³ Things had "so endangered settlers" on the border that the United States "prepared to land a small Marine Corps expedition for their protection," compelling the Mexicans to send a "considerable force to that area."¹⁴ This was in the wake of Mexico opening up huge swathes of Yaqui land for settlement. "Over seven thousand American settlers poured into the northern tier of states, putting up fences on what they regarded as inexpensive private property." As some of the oppressed saw it, violence had been used to seize the land and violence would be necessary to reclaim it.¹⁵ Hence, "hatred toward the yori" or "whites . . . united the tribe." "Temastianes (shamans), mothers and the elderly men and women allegedly fomented the hatred and fear of the 'enemy.' For this reason, Colonel Angel Garcia Pena informed the Secretary of War that 'one of our principal enemies is the female' who educated the children to hate the yori."¹⁶

This kind of animus was not particular to the Yaqui alone. Friedrich Katz correctly asserts that the essential background of the revolution in northern Mexico was the "two-century-old tradition of savage combat against nomadic Indians," particularly the *bête noire* of the borderlands: the Apaches, who often responded in kind.¹⁷ Yet many of the indigenous peoples preferred to ally with Mexico when it came to a confrontation with the United States—or so it seemed to the U.S. government.

In 1916 the commissioner of Indian Affairs learned that "Mexican soldiers appeared on reservations . . . trying to persuade Indians [to] assist [them] when trouble comes." Esteven Ortiz, a "Papago . . . speaks Spanish fluently and they told him . . . there was going to be trouble with the Americans and asked him to have the Indians help the Mexicans." Weapons were in short supply: "There are on hand only some revolvers for the police, without any ammunition." Ortiz recalled that the Mexican agents "asked me [if] I didn't know all this country around Tucson belonged to Sonora and it was going to belong to Sonora again and the Indians would then be treated like citizens." The Mexicans were said to "tell

the Indians they should buy all the ammunition they could little by little, and hide it and their guns [so] no one would see them."¹⁸

About a decade before the Plan, "handbills" were "circulated" in the region, "one of which, nailed to a fence, proclaimed, 'Curse the thought that a Mexican is worth less than a Yankee; that a Negro or Chinaman is to be compared to a Mexican. . . . Mexicans Awaken! The country and our dignity demand it!'"¹⁹ The Plan, in short, was not inconsistent with the apocalyptic flavor of the era. For this was the time in Waco when "whites mobilized on rumors that [Sam] Doyle had organized other blacks to arm themselves and store up food to feed the Mexicans who would join their conspiracy once all the whites were drafted. Local whites, even though they constituted nearly 60 percent of the population, were soon 'badly excited' fearing they all would be murdered."²⁰ As early as 1913, Carranza's "agents" were actively purchasing arms and recruiting men at Laredo for a campaign against the United States. Later Carranza was informed that this effort would gain momentum if they allied with U.S. "Negros."²¹ In August 1915 in San Antonio, "twenty-six Mexicans" were arrested "after a disturbance that was a sequel to a street meeting . . . during which one of the speakers declared . . . 'Now is the time to rise! Let us kill the Gringos!'"²²

In 1912—well before the Plan came to light—Mexican diplomats filed a lengthy story about the plight of those of Mexican origin in San Diego, in Duval County, Texas. The county was "90 percent" Mexican. According to the *Houston Chronicle*, "the Americans . . . generally do not recognize any virtue in this element; they have the strongest race hatred and race prejudice against them." "Election day killings" gave democracy a bad name. "Fear of a race riot" was equally commonplace. The *Chronicle* observed that "a Negro, for instance, in Fayette County, enjoys better protection, receives more justice, than a Mexican of the poorer classes generally in this section of the country. A man may there successfully appeal that the Negro is a human being and as such has rights; if you claim rights for a Mexican, some hold that you are no true American. . . . San Diego especially has a large number of respectable well-to-do, educated and even refined Mexican families. Still they are referred to as Indians. . . . Some Americans do not regard them in a higher class than the Negroes." The *Chronicle* warned, "As long as the above described political conditions continue in Duval County there will be chances and occasions for further bloodshed." An attached note from the Mexican consul in San Antonio lamented the "complaints of maltreated Mexicans" who "suffer punishments."²³

African Americans in particular had imbibed a harsh and bitter lesson, the perception of their preferred position notwithstanding. Ida B. Wells-Barnett, the indefatigable anti-lynching leader, put it pithily in 1892. "Of the many inhuman outrages of the present year, the only case where the proposed lynching did *not* occur was where the men armed themselves. . . . The lesson this teaches is that a Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every black home, and it should be used for that protection which the law refuses to give. When the white man who is always the aggressor knows he runs as great a risk of biting the dust every time [an] Afro-America[n] does, he will have greater respect for Afro-American life. The more the Afro-American yields and cringes and begs, the more he has to do so, the more he is insulted, outraged and lynched."²⁴

The violence of the borderlands proved her point. For if the "Plan" was a fiction, massacres of various sorts were not. Charles Cumberland, a close student of the borderlands, observes that even as the "Plan" was being devised and aborted, the "1915 raids" along the border were "in many respects more important" than the Villa raids. The "four prosperous counties, comprising a total area only slightly less than of Connecticut, were temporarily halted in their economic development, hundreds of people were killed, thousands fled from the region, and property worth millions of dollars was destroyed." The region was "near chaos." Yet, despite this upheaval, "the connection between the visionary [Plan] and the raids in the lower valley was apparently never considered. Two of the more persistent and successful leaders of the raids, however, operated within the general framework of the Plan of San Diego from May until the conclusion of the raids in October." For example, "Aniceto Pizaña and Luis de la Rosa, both American citizens who had been relatively successful economically in the valley, accepted positions of leadership under the plan and organized raiding bands composed of both Mexicans and Americans, of Mexican extraction . . . in a skirmish [in] August." The U.S. military "captured documents and banners indicating Mexico as the source of the raids and the Plan of San Diego as the motive." Despite the Plan's call for Black Self-Determination, Negro troopers acquiesced to being "stationed . . . at Kingsville to act as a check against the spread of disorder."²⁵

During the twentieth century the borderlands, particularly South Texas during the Revolution, endured a greater and more sustained level of violence than any other region in the country. This degree of violence lends credibility to the idea of the Plan, including its magnitude. The "death toll recorded by the [Texas] Rangers and others in this mishmash of largely

“Kill the ‘Gringo’ Men!”



This gruesome lynching in Texas was symptomatic of the gross violence that characterized this state—where the “Old South” met the “Wild West”—during the era of the Mexican Revolution. Courtesy Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

unaccountable law enforcement will never be known. Two decades later residents were still finding skeletons with bullet holes in the skulls.”²⁶ David Montejano notes that the “Valley” was “turned . . . into a virtual war zone during 1915–1917. . . . Hundreds of people were killed, thousands were dislocated. . . . Groups of from twenty-five to a hundred men organized in quasi-military companies, raided the Valley.”²⁷ The lower Rio Grande Valley during the Revolution faced the grim prospect of a “possible ‘race war.’”²⁸

The effects of the Plan reached well beyond South Texas. It caused “considerable anxiety” in Phoenix, for “according to [one rumor] Mexicans were ‘drilling daily’ southwest of the nearby town of Glendale” and just waiting to pounce on the gringos.²⁹ Years later, the then eighty-four-year-old publisher John Sutherland reflected on the Plan. Hailing from San Diego, he recalled how “for a full year I kept that house under surveillance,” pointing to a nondescript house where the plot was hatched, “sitting on my front porch and watching the plotters come and go, listening

to them talk. . . . In fact, I was the one who reported the whole scheme to the United States Attorney General's Office."³⁰

Presumably Mr. Sutherland was referring to Basilio Ramos and his comrades, who were indicted for "Seditious Conspiracy" in 1915. Of the eight witnesses for the prosecution, three had Spanish surnames. According to a copy of the Plan in the hands of the U.S. authorities, the defendants planned to "arise in arms" against the United States in the name of the "Liberty Army for Races and People." The Plan stated that "the leader who may take a city must immediately name and appoint municipal authorities. . . . It is strictly forbidden to hold prisoners, either special prisoners (civilians) or soldiers; and the only time that should be spent in dealing with them is that which is absolutely necessary to demand funds (loans) of them; and whether these demands be successful or not they shall be shot immediately, without protest. . . . Every North American over sixteen years of age shall be put to death; and only the aged men, the women, and the children shall be respected; and on no account shall the traitors to our race be spared or respected." On the other hand, "the Apaches of Arizona, as well as the Indians (redskins) of the territory shall be given every guarantee, and their lands which has [*sic*] been taken from them shall be returned to them. . . . We shall proclaim them an independent republic, later requesting (if it be thought expedient) annexation to Mexico."

As for African Americans, the Plan said, "When we shall have obtained independence for the Negroes we shall grant them a banner, which they themselves shall be permitted to select, and shall aid them in obtaining six states of the American union, which states border on those already mentioned, and they may form from these six states a republic, and they may be, therefore, independent." It added, "This is a war without quarter; nor shall any leader enroll in his ranks any stranger, unless said stranger belong to the Latin, the Negro, or the Japanese race." It emphasized the "Independence of the Negro." "On no account," it stated with equal emphasis, "will we accept aid, either moral or pecuniary, from the government of Mexico; and it need not consider itself under any obligations in this, our movement." The Plan's architects were as concerned about Jim Crow as they were about casting aside the "government of Mexico." Their statements about the latter may have been a deliberate effort to foil speculation—and mislead—their enemies as to their identity.

The witnesses against the defendants were just as emphatic in their critique. Deodoro Guerra, a resident of McAllen, Texas, and a merchant there for five years, knew the chief defendant, Ramos. "I had information that

this man was trying to raise a revolution against the United States, in Texas," he testified after being "duly sworn." "I had this information from Doctor Andres Villareal. . . . He told me that this man had come to him and asked him to help out in carrying out this revolution against the United States." For his part the tight-lipped Ramos replied, "I have nothing to say, excepting that the documents I had in my possession were made and executed at Monterrey, Mexico." Sheriff A.Y. Baker of Hidalgo County agreed with this characterization of the defendant, saying, "he had little to say," though he noted that "General Nafarrate" of Mexico "and those fellows were friendly to this move."³¹

Mexican involvement aside, the U.S. government could not remain indifferent to this attempt to turn the presumed strength of white supremacy against the United States. "In Texas," the defendants said with rancor, "[whites] have paid their workers with an unjustified race hatred that closes to the Mexican, the Negro, the Asian, the doors of schools, the hotels, the theaters of every public space; that segregates them on railroad cars and keeps them out of meeting places of 'white skinned' savages who constitute a superior caste."³² Unlike earlier claimants who asked why Mexicans should be treated with the contempt usually reserved for Negroes, the authors of the Plan took a different tack.

The taciturn Ramos was twenty-four and was born in Nuevo Laredo, just across the border where sensitivity to Yankee slights and a resultant Mexican nationalism were high. Single, "never married," he entered the United States in January 1915—the month the Plan was proclaimed—by way of Matamoros, going to Brownsville, Texas, "by way of the bridge, in a hack," carrying "two suitcases." Formerly he was "secretary of the Customs-house under Diaz, Madero and Huerta," though he had been living in the United States periodically since "29th of May 1914, when [he] was expelled from Mexico. . . . [He] was in San Diego, Texas as agent of the Royal Brewing Company of Kansas City, the agency for Texas being in Laredo." He acknowledged his signature on the Plan. "The document was prepared by a friend of ours," he explained, "and smuggled into the jail, where it was signed by all the signers, all of whom were in jail at the time, as Huertistas. . . . It was smuggled by the servant who brought our meals." Like himself, the other signatories were mostly "natives" of Nuevo Laredo or Monterrey. He acknowledged he had been "appointed to push the Plan."³³

A comrade of Ramos who had attended school in Jim Crow Oklahoma reported that the Mexicans' "recruiting" in South Texas "included the

black population. Federal agent Howard Wright, stationed in Austin, collected rumors that 'Mexicans living near Austin were endeavoring to persuade and induce Negroes to join them in an effort to make Texas a part of Mexico.' One black informant living six miles outside of the city told Wright that he had received several visits, dating back to the spring of 1914, in which '[t]hese Mexicans told that they really owned Texas; that they owned all the country from the Rio Grande to the Red River and that the white Americans didn't own none of it. . . . They said that the white folks can't fight . . . and that they wanted the niggers [*sic*] in Texas to join them against the Texas white folks.' A black man residing in Austin itself also stated that he was asked to join the Plan of San Diego in March [or] April 1915. In a subsequent report, Wright stated that a black porter at the city paper was approached by unidentified Mexicans 'to join with them in making Texas a part of Mexico.'"³⁴

The Plan was causing unease in the region, even after Ramos and his confederates were detained. The state adjutant general was informed that the "San Diego revolutionaries still continue to hold their meetings and are causing considerable uneasiness among the white people."³⁵ The U.S. government's sensitivities were aroused when it noticed Ramos receiving mail referring to "white faced hogs."³⁶

Such rhetoric attracted some Negroes. Juan Cross, an "Afro-Mexican" and son-in-law of "the most prominent valley Huertista, Dr. Miguel Barragan," lived in Brownsville. He "owned a large lumberyard" and sympathized with many of the Plan's aims. Jesse Mosely, an African American serving as a "surgeon in the Constitutionalist army," was a strong supporter who "joined the movement in Mexico City and traveled to South Texas, recruiting blacks around Austin and San Marcos."³⁷ According to army officials, he "spent about three months in Texas and Oklahoma trying to enlist Negroes to join in an uprising against the Government of Texas, joining with the Mexicans." He "was paid by the Constitutionalist General Luis Caballero for his work, and . . . [he] has 'been heard to say that they could enlist in their cause a large number of German and German-American[s], also Japanese . . . [and] that several platoons of Negro soldiers had agreed to desert the U.S. Army and join their cause.'" It turned out that a "handful of Japanese, apparently from Monterrey," were implicated in the "South Texas raids."³⁸

Dr. Mosely was a medical version of Jack Johnson. He too chose to live in Mexico and "bragged that he lived in a country where 'a man is a man. I am the physician to the Governor of this state [Tamaulipas]," he said

proudly.³⁹ The good doctor "apparently boasted of what he was going to do when all the white men were sent off to France and when questioned was found to be armed with a sawed-off shotgun and a pistol."⁴⁰ Not surprisingly, the U.S. War Department viewed this "active agitator," this "American renegade Negro," with utter disdain. It felt no regret when the "body" of this "surgeon of the Carrancista forces . . . was found about three months ago on the American side of the Rio Grande a few miles south of Laredo."⁴¹ He had been "arrested," then "released by the American authorities" before "his body was discovered, near Laredo, his skull crushed."⁴² He had been killed by unknown assailants.

But militancy did not die with him. What gave the Plan resonance and terrified Washington was a major rise of black militancy. A "confidential" publication referred to a street corner speaker in New York City who apparently was "advis[ing]" Negro soldiers to "kill white officers." A copy of this incendiary pamphlet was in the possession of Booker T. Washington's man, Emmett Scott. It had the stamp of NAACP leader "Major J. E. Spingarn" on the cover, which showed how seriously it was being taken. The U.S. government informant worried that "that thought"—that is, killing "white officers"—"once planted might well bear fruit on more than one foreign battlefield. . . . From the same stump another Negro told us the day of the white man was passing. He had sinned out his right to dominate and the Japanese, the Chinese and the Negro were to inherit his power."⁴³ This explains why Spingarn, who persuaded Du Bois to back the United States's entry into the European war, developed "the idea of a nationwide counterintelligence network within the black population"⁴⁴ and why Scott tried vainly to "nullify all false and unpatriotic impressions that pro-Germans have sought to make upon Colored Americans in various sections of the country."⁴⁵ Scott, who was "special assistant to the Secretary of War, with specific duty to maintain the morale of the colored population of the United States,"⁴⁶ was informed, "some German sympathizers or agents" have been "going about the South and among Negroes particularly" seeking to "confuse Negro patriotism" by discussing indelicate matters like lynching.⁴⁷

According to Scott, this "propaganda became so serious from the military end that active measures were taken to suppress it. The real [*sic*] leaders of the race in this country were called to a conference in Washington" in June 1918 and "active counter-propaganda" was prepared. Then "the President issued a statement . . . deprecating and denouncing mob action and that is about the last that was heard of the German propaganda among

Negroes."⁴⁸ Not necessarily. But the point was that even Wilson the Dixiecrat had to compromise on Jim Crow in the face of challenges to national security.

This weaving together of Germany and Negro grievances had a downside in that it allowed some members of the U.S. government to blame Germany for its "Negro problem," in what became a repetitive theme after the Berlin–Mexico City alliance came clear. Thus, a Wisconsin attorney argued that the "recent race riot in East St. Louis, if ever understood in its true light, will be found, in my opinion, to have had a malevolent origin, either IWW or a more direct Teutonic instigation." There was "real Teutonic hostility among us," he thought. "I wish now I had kept up my German, we should not go to sleep because the foe among us is apparently silent."⁴⁹ They were so silent that their direct responsibility for Negro grievances could remain undetected.

Fear of the Negro with a gun—which inexorably led to fear of black soldiers—was at the heart of the concern about the meaning of the Plan. Bishop C. S. Smith of the A.M.E. church warned Virginia's governor that to "guard against race friction" the "authorities" should not "treat demobilized white youth as children and demobilized Negro youth as stepchildren," for a "blaze will surely be kindled" by such discrimination. Although "this is not to be construed as a threat, [if] violent race disturbances" were to occur, "the responsibility for such will largely rest with those who by their indifference and inactivity prove traitors to the cause of peace and order."⁵⁰ He warned against "the revival of the Ku Klux Klan" then in progress and promised to respond appropriately if this were to continue. He acknowledged that a "large group of southern whites [was] hysterical over possible Negro domination" in the wake of all the talk of democracy brought by the Great War and the spotlight placed on Carrizal. But, like the Houston Mutiny of 1917, more than Negroes would perish if "violent race disturbances" were to recur, not least due to the government's reliance on Negro troops which had given many of these men training in weapons.⁵¹ "The Government transformed them," he informed the War Department, "from meek youth into bellicose belligerents. . . . The fighting spirit engendered in them through military training will abide. It is fair, then, to presume that they will energetically resent mistreatment."⁵²

The bishop was on to something. U.S. intelligence "picked up new information that [an] organization and journal for black officers was about to be set up in the United States along the lines of a Masonic lodge. The

man behind the scheme was 'a Methodist or Baptist minister of Galveston, Texas, radical and probably militant in his views.'" Lieutenant Osceola E. McKaine was helping in "the formation in Harlem of the League for Democracy . . . the most radical and successful of the black veterans' associations." A native of South Carolina, he "joined the army in 1914, serving in the Philippines and afterward with the 24th Infantry at Columbus, New Mexico and under Pershing during the latter's pursuit of Pancho Villa."⁵³

The problem for the U.S. authorities was that Negro resentment of their mistreatment was joined by similar feelings among those of Mexican origin, inspired by the example of the Mexican Revolution. In the southern reaches of Texas they were often in league with their compatriots across the border. In June 1916 there was a fierce attack on San Ygnacio, Texas. According to the U.S. military, "all papers found on dead Mexicans bore the stamp of the Constitutionalist Army." The detained Vincent Lira, formerly of San Antonio, reportedly confessed that "the object of the expedition was to start a revolution on this side of the border. . . . All of these bandits were . . . Carranzista soldiers."⁵⁴

Also in this category, according to the U.S. authorities, were "Luis De Larosa and Aniceto Pizaña. . . . These notorious men . . . are the leading spirits of the so-called Plan of San Diego and . . . were responsible for the bloody raids into Texas last fall. . . . The files of State and War Departments and [the] Department of Justice are loaded with information" about them. They were being assisted "in every way" by the "Carranza commander of the district of Matamoros," whose "men were participating" in raids in Texas as well. "On two occasions Carranza troops in uniform to the number of several hundred covered the retreat of raiders . . . and in so doing fought [U.S.] troops for hours." Carranza allegedly "personally had knowledge of what was being done and approved of it." These "facts" were "notorious" and "familiar to practically all informed persons on the lower border." The raids were rousing Anglo civilians "to fury." In response they chose to "execute by hanging or shooting approximately three hundred suspected Mexicans on [the] American side" of the border.⁵⁵ A fierce assault on Nogales, Arizona, followed in 1918, in which Negro troopers were among the "twenty-nine enlisted men wounded on the American side." In its aftermath the U.S. government argued that this was all "precipitated by the machinations of German agents, two of whom, apparently officers, had been found among the dead after the fight."⁵⁶

Such massacres and firefights further stoked Mexican and Negro anger. Repeated accusations were made during the revolutionary era about Negro-Mexican plots against the United States along the lines of the Plan. "Fears of plots and uprisings" among Negroes particularly rose to levels not seen since the "slave insurrection panic shortly before the Civil War." As a result "white southerners" felt particularly vulnerable in 1917 and 1918. As in the Civil War, the anticipated absence of white males off fighting on the border or in Europe was expected to embolden angry Negroes. Like the Plan, these rumors implicated not only Mexico but Japan and Germany as well.

Negroes in Jim Crow North Carolina had good reason to rebel. One state official told the state's Council of Defense, "I have attended a meeting of prominent Negro ministers" in Washington, North Carolina, "Two of the most intelligent [men] have just reported to [me] that at a place called Evergreen in Columbus County an old Negro man named Oliver, well known in that community, was approached a few nights ago by a German spy. He told him that he, the German, was visiting the colored people particularly to inform them that the Germans were their friends and that they fully expected to defeat the white people of this country and gain possession and that the colored people would not be molested under the new laws which the Germans would establish."⁵⁷ The *California Eagle*, a black newspaper, claimed that the "German government has agents in the South," notably North Carolina, "promising the blacks if they 'rise against the whites and government' that the Kaiser 'will then place them on a par with the whites.'"⁵⁸

Black leader George King sighed that "daily the responsibilities of those leading the masses of my race are becoming more exacting" due to "German lies and combating same and helping to ferret out slackers." He reassured the powers-that-be that "when it comes to the Negroes of North Carolina responding they are not to be excelled by Negroes in any part of the country," but local leaders were not convinced.⁵⁹ The worried Arthur J. Draper, president of the Cotton Manufacturers Association in Charlotte asked the head of the all-white University of North Carolina to "assist in raising a fund to disseminate information" to influence Negroes since they "have been influenced by German propaganda."⁶⁰

In South Carolina it was rumored that German agents were persuading blacks to migrate to Mexico so as to cripple southern agriculture. The same idea arose in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana. Two white men were seized at a mining town north of Birmingham and

charged with inciting Negroes against the government and encouraging their flight to Mexico. A postal official in Tunica, Mississippi, reported a meeting attended by five hundred cheering Negroes at which one of them was said to have urged the others to join Germany, Mexico, and Japan in attacking the United States. The sheriff of Rolling Fork, Mississippi, anxiously reported the recruitment of Negroes for a German-Mexican army. Gypsy fortune-tellers in the South were fueling Negroes' fears by informing them that if Germany did not emerge triumphant, they would be reenslaved. Hence, intelligence specialist Ralph Van Deman sounded credible when he said, "There are as yet very direct efforts being made in Texas and other southern states by the Mexicans to induce the Negroes to take up their residence in Mexico."

Texas, which, along with Virginia, had the largest number of black disloyalty investigations—twice as many as any other state—was rocked by one fearful rumor after another. Negroes in Dallas were said to have been told by Mexico that "if you go to Mexico you can live in peace and luxury." Agents of Carranza were said to have pledged that his government would "welcome blacks, provide land, education for their children and a new start in life." In the Lone Star state "local whites . . . including the postmaster, believed that German agents were indeed flying at night from Mexico to spy, then returning to their sanctuary before daylight." In Seattle, far from the origins of the Plan, the authorities "investigated a black confectionery chief who boasted that he was party to an agreement in which blacks would start a revolution, whereupon German army reservists in Mexico would invade the southwest and turn captured territory over to blacks." A "black woman . . . expressed the wish that Germans would invade the United States and kill all whites."

Presumably this was all part of a Mexico-sponsored "alliance of all darker races to seek their collective liberation from the dominant white nations." Echoing such feelings, Reverend Elijah Branch of Galveston (Jack Johnson's hometown) urged, "Do like the Mexicans or Germans. Stand up and fight." Herman Moens, thought to be a German spy, did just that. He "traveled throughout the West and . . . was 'around the Mexican border at the time of the trouble there' [and] had a 'great many Negro women calling to see him every day.'" Earlier, Harlem radical Hubert Harrison had welcomed him to his "Liberty Congress." When Pat Murphy, a black man thought to have been born and raised in Germany, who had worked for many years on German ships, was caught photographing military buildings at Camp Travis and Fort Houston in Texas, the idea that

Germany had joined with Mexico in subverting the United States grew stronger.⁶¹ Similarly, from Mississippi during this time came "unsubstantiated reports from every section of the state [which] alleged that 'Kaiser-[talking] Negroes' and black 'disloyalists' were stockpiling weapons, conducting espionage, and conspiring with enemy agents to resist the draft and overthrow white authority."⁶²

Even if every one of these stories was untrue—which is doubtful—cumulatively they contributed to a state of hysteria and occasional concessions on the part of U.S. elites, just as they inspired many Negroes. These stories also revealed a profound sense of guilt among many Euro-Americans about their maltreatment of the Negro, in that increasingly larger anti-Washington conspiracies were taken seriously. Finally, they reflected the age-old notion that Negroes were eminently susceptible to manipulation by outsiders, beginning with the northern abolitionists in the slave south, and that otherwise they would not have been aroused from their supposed torpor.⁶³

Contemporaneous sources accepted as credible the idea that as tensions between Berlin and Washington rose, Germany would seek to stir up trouble in the United States. There were "German efforts to start a race war" in the United States, according to a U.S. Senate investigation, "and failing that, race riots in the southern states." The "Germans not only followed the Negroes into the cotton fields and mills, but also into the army. . . . All of the Negro propaganda work was conducted from Mexico by von Eckhardt. . . . The men used for the Negro propaganda work were Mexicans and half-breeds and men that were brought to Mexico City and instructed and sent across the border and the wave of Negro propaganda work went from the Mexican border east, and embraced the states principally of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, [and] Georgia. North and South Carolina were on the outskirts of the movement." The "propaganda became so serious from the military end that active measures were taken to suppress it."⁶⁴

The U.S. authorities were in such a panic that they were willing to prosecute on the flimsiest of charges. Thus, "J. S. Epps, a Negro, spiritual adviser of the Last Call to the House of Prayer Church in Berkeley" faced a "federal charge of violating the espionage law. He is alleged to have remarked that President Wilson was a 'figurehead' and to have spoken disparagingly of Liberty Loan subscribers."⁶⁵

Robert Spence believes Berlin "aim[ed at] forging a Japanese-Mexican-German effort to contain and distract the United States." Even Britain, os-

tensibly a U.S. ally, acknowledged that “whatever their differences elsewhere, Britain and Germany had a common bond in their resistance to American domination of Mexico,”⁶⁶ just as their mutual anti-Washington sentiments made allies of Mexico and Germany.⁶⁷ Thus, as Congress debated whether to issue a declaration of war against Germany—not long after the bruising setback at Carrizal—“federal agents claimed to have uncovered a network of German spies working in conjunction with ‘professional’ African American revolutionaries and Mexican and Japanese agents to ‘set the country ablaze with a Negro insurrection’ in order to divert U.S. armed forces from the war in Europe. . . . [Allegedly] German spies had met with blacks in Greensboro, North Carolina and New York City to discuss the ‘Plan of San Diego.’” When asked to comment, George Harris, the black newspaper editor, confirmed the story. He claimed that Berlin’s agents had been “stirring up the Negroes against white people’ in the South ‘for some time.’” During his war message to Congress, President Wilson confirmed that Germany had “filled our unsuspecting communities . . . with spies.”⁶⁸

Wilson had “reason for grave apprehension” about Germany-Mexico relations. He told his fellow Dixiecrat, Congressman Edward W. Pou of North Carolina, about the “wireless station” being constructed in Chapultepec, Mexico, which would allow Berlin to “be capable of communicating directly” with Europe. “The work is being done by Germans under the direction of a German expert.” “German agents,” he added, were “active at Tampico in agitating the laborers along IWW lines, and the results may be very serious.”⁶⁹

Those of Mexican origin were viewed suspiciously as well. “Some Americans rightly or wrongly questioned New Mexico’s fidelity and willingness to fight for the United States,” due to its heavy concentration of Hispanics. One writer declared that “a Mexican army financed with German gold would have little difficulty in invading the United States by way of Mexico. Indeed, such a force could expect to be warmly welcomed and readily assisted by New Mexico’s large Spanish [*sic*] population.” If such an eventuality arose, those “even suspected of treason” should be “simply shot without trial.”⁷⁰

President Wilson thus had reason to take the “Zimmerman Telegram” seriously. Evidence was piling up daily in Washington about German penetration of both Mexico and Black America. As early as 1915, the secretary of state was informed about “increased activity by German agents in Mexico. . . . The German government desires to keep Mexico in a state of

ferment and anarchy, so that the United States will have a constant menace to peace on the border."⁷¹ From the United States, John Kleiber told the story that during the Revolution he was aboard a train in northern Chihuahua when a "gang of Carrancistas boarded" and "robbed and killed several Americans, though they did not harm the German passengers and American-born Hispanics."⁷² Germans in Mexico were often favored, especially if their interests were in conflict with those of U.S. nationals.⁷³

One senate aide argued that the Plan was not a "fake" but "stern reality and connected up, right close with the Carranza Government." He was aghast that on the many raids across the border, "some of the soldiers killed in uniform, had German rifles, German ammunition and a German iron cross was found."⁷⁴ He believed "the Germans gave Carranza fifty thousand dollars with which to further the invasion of Texas under the Plan of San Diego. . . . I have this proof well in hand," he insisted. "I have positive eyewitness proof."⁷⁵

The Russian scholars M. S. Alperovich and B. T. Rudenko concurred, declaring that the Plan was "inspired [in part] by the German Consul in Monterrey, Burachard." They say there were "Mexicans working for German espionage," just as Carranza sought to "employ German-U.S. contradictions to weaken" the latter's positions.⁷⁶ Dr. R. H. Ellis of El Paso, "who served as medical chief of staff under Villa" went so far as to say that the "Columbus raid was staged by Carranza's agents in order to turn the United States against Villa" (the guerilla leader was not even there, he said) and that "German Foreign Minister Arthur Zimmerman (author of the famous 'Zimmerman Telegram') was directing anti-American activity in Mexico 'as far back as 1914.'"⁷⁷ It was all part of a Mexican scheme to coerce the United States diplomatically—a tactic usually deployed by Washington against other nations in the hemisphere—and compel it to improve relations at gunpoint. Did the cross-border raiders not seek refuge in Mexico with impunity and was it not true that the pro-Carranza press "propagandized in favor of race war in Texas," the heart of the Plan?⁷⁸

By the time the revolutionary era began, even Berlin's Ottoman ally was involved in the region, as the Turkish population in British Honduras, Mexico's neighbor, was accused of stirring things up there. Was this not evidence of a global plot against Anglo-American interests?⁷⁹ A U.S. brigadier general told the sheriff of Stockton, Texas, in mid-1918 that "it is the duty of every officer whether he be Sheriff or Ranger to see that we do not get into complications with Mexico as every other soldier that is

needed must be sent to France. . . . Do nothing that will bring on war with Mexico at this time."⁸⁰

The NAACP had to be sensitive to these issues. On the one hand, allegations of disloyalty could further discredit the African American constituency it was sworn to uphold, while on the other, such reports could provide it with leverage, as those who worried about the loss of black morale might be inclined to make concessions. Du Bois therefore had to tread a fine line. Thus, the NAACP reported examples of German propaganda that sounded like its own rhetoric. Berlin was asking Negro soldiers, "Can you go into a restaurant where white people dine? Can you get a seat in the theatre where white people sit? . . . Is lynching and the most horrible crimes connected therewith, a lawful proceeding in a democratic country?" "All this is entirely different in Germany."⁸¹ German "agents" repeatedly "told Mexicans along the border and probably Mexican exiles that Germany did not have racial discrimination, or lynching of minorities."⁸² The NAACP suggested that not only was Jim Crow providing Germany with leverage, but also that Jim Crow advocates were espousing the same line as the nation's enemies. Thus, the attempt to "prevent conscription of Negroes" was said to be a "German plot" and not just one from Dixie.⁸³ The whole time Du Bois was blandly reporting that "considerable currency has been given to alleged plots among southern colored people by German propagandists."⁸⁴

Evidently Joel Spingarn, Du Bois's close friend in the NAACP, was not as confident about absent German influence, concurring that some anti-war Negroes "may well be secretly promoted by German influence. . . . We may yet find that many Negro lynchings are, in fact, fomented or aggravated by German spies and that the sullen attitude and more imperative demand for better treatment noticeable among Southern Negroes of late, is fed from that source. . . . We of the South have made light of German propaganda among the Negroes [but] a prominent and wealthy Mississippi Negro showed me a well printed post card," adding, "This is German propaganda."⁸⁵

Those familiar with Germany's World War I record might be surprised to know that it had a much better record than the United States on the Negro front. The German refugees who flocked to the United States after the failed revolutions of 1848 laid the foundations for this perception. John Frederick Nau has gone so far as to say, "The natural German attitude was anti-slavery. Many, therefore, interpreted patriotism as prompting eternal enmity to the institution of slavery."⁸⁶ Truly, "the characteristic

which has perhaps become most closely identified with ante-bellum German farmers in Texas was an absence of slaves. Both contemporary observers and modern scholars have laid stress on the free labor system found in the eastern settlements, and there is no doubt that Germans were much less likely to own slaves than were the Anglo-Americans." Thus "the belief was held among many Anglo-Americans in the 1850s that all Germans were 'damned Dutch abolitionists.'" ⁸⁷

After the Civil War, "blacks and Germans often lived side by side, sharing exterior and sometimes interior space. . . . Marriages between African-Americans and Germans" were not uncommon. "Germans were four times as likely to marry blacks than were Irish immigrants. . . . As Germans were not as likely as the Irish to see blacks as immediate threats to their community, their reaction to African Americans was less extreme. . . . During the racial violence of the 1860[s] Germans even attempted to control the Irish rioters." ⁸⁸

Germans had also developed a reputation for being less hostile to Native Americans than others of European descent. Karl May, perhaps the "most widely read German author of all times," specialized in romantic tales about Native Americans. ⁸⁹ The "German equivalent of Zane Grey, Ned Buntline and James Fenimore Cooper all rolled into one," he wrote seventy-four action-packed novels and "more than 80 million of his books have been printed in the German language" alone—this in a country of about 80 million people. "Every German over the age of six knows about Winnetou," his leading German character, a "brave and noble Apache chief." There are "hundreds, perhaps thousands of cowboy-and-Indian clubs sprinkled across Germany." In communist East Germany, May was celebrated "because of his humanistic portrayal of Indians, blacks, the elderly and other groups." ⁹⁰

May "had been inspired to write about the adventures in the American-Mexican border region of the Southwest in the course of translation of Gabriel Ferry's *Le Coureur de bois*, in which the Comanches were depicted as the allies of the French in their battle against the Apaches." An "ultimate merging of Germans and Indians was actually suggested in the negotiations leading to the 'private treaty' of 1847 between the German colonists of New Braunfels in Texas and the Comanches." Perhaps this interest explains why "about one thousand titles of Indian fiction [were] published in Germany between 1875 and 1900." ⁹¹

The "German obsession with Indians has been notorious for decades." ⁹² The "loyalty of Germans within the colony became a burning

concern for Pennsylvania's Anglo-American political leaders." Benjamin Franklin questioned the very "whiteness" of Germans. "The numbers of purely white people in the world is proportionately very small," he thought, and they definitely did not include all Germans—or Spaniards—who were "swarthy."⁹³ In the 1850s when the Native American activist George Copway sought to promote his "own grand project for an American Indian union," his tour inevitably took him to Germany.⁹⁴ There were "German boys who had been captured and adopted by Kiowas and Comanches" and "grew up and fought [alongside] them against Americans."⁹⁵

These patterns were replicated abroad. "Germans married Haitian women" on the island of Hispaniola, but Euro-Americans did not. "Haitians were generally received into German and French society, while contacts with Americans, especially painful when Haitians visited the United States, were blighted by racial prejudice and Jim Crow social barriers."⁹⁶ James Weldon Johnson, a leading NAACP official, noticed when he was serving as U.S. Consul in Latin America in the early 1900s that the Germans were more prone to marry into local families than were Euro-Americans or the British.⁹⁷ The same was true in Mexico, said Louise Gates of El Paso. Herself born in Mexico of a Mexican mother and U.S. father, she observed that the "Germans married a great [deal] into the better families" and "there were a great many Germans in Mexico—they were not, you know, didn't come here penniless. They were generally from wealthy families. . . . The young men married a lot of Mexican girls."⁹⁸

Hence there was good reason for Negroes, Native Americans, and those of Mexican origin to listen carefully to German appeals. Would these groups be worse off if Anglo-Americans lost out in the war to Berlin? As anti-German hysteria heated up in the United States, Du Bois, who had studied in Berlin, commented on the "work of churches of German origin among American Negroes. The excellent work of the Lutherans antedates the present war by many years and deserves all praise."⁹⁹ He was conspicuously silent about other (mostly) white denominations.

Japan, having learned so much from the German military, emulated Berlin's social and diplomatic tactics as well. Not only had they long cultivated African Americans¹⁰⁰ in one of the earliest attempts to exploit the national security weaknesses of white supremacy, but they also did so with Mexicans.¹⁰¹ Just as they were a constant presence on the west coast from Seattle to San Diego, California, men of Japanese ancestry were regularly

passed through the inland border town of Naco, Arizona, during the revolutionary era on their way to various points south and north.¹⁰² Some of them were workers on the strategically located Santa Fe Pacific railroad.¹⁰³

In December 1910 a Japanese admiral resuscitated the theory that "Mexico had originally been settled by Japanese fishermen who had been blown across the Pacific on a raft. He also noted that both nations were building up their military forces to resist insults to their national honor from a common enemy, a thinly veiled reference to the United States."¹⁰⁴

For the longest time Japan had eyed Mexico's western coast, while immigration from Nippon to California had been occurring since at least the late nineteenth century.¹⁰⁵ In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt was already wringing his hands about this, saying "It seems incredible that Japanese should go to Mexico with any intention of organizing an armed force to attack us from the Mexican border in the event of war with Japan."¹⁰⁶ After Japan defeated Russia in 1905 and challenged the very basis of white supremacy in the process, "the wave of anti-Japanese hysteria that swept through the United States . . . was also manifesting itself in fear of a Japanese-Mexican alliance."¹⁰⁷ In some ways the situation with Japan was even more sensitive than that with Germany because it was seen widely as a "race" question, with all the complications this entailed for a nation like the United States. As Theodore Roosevelt said later about Japan, "This is a race question, and . . . race questions stand by themselves. . . . I did not clearly see this at the outset." He worried that if Japanese immigration continued at then current rates, "Our Pacific states and British Columbia [may] declare their independence as a separate republic in close alliance with Australia."¹⁰⁸

Germany presented no such problem. Germans had established a colony in Nuevo Leon, Mexico, as early as 1856,¹⁰⁹ while a Japanese colony came along only in 1896.¹¹⁰ But it was the latter that seemed to inflame U.S. public opinion.

Yet, like Germany, Japan was well respected in Haiti, an inspiration for the global black population. One Haitian leader, "like many literate Haitians . . . admired the nation-building and modernizing achievements of the Japanese and derived from their experience the lesson that the theory of racial inferiority had no basis in empirical observation."¹¹¹

As the Revolution got under way, Tokyo made a bid to purchase Magdalena Bay in lower California, seeming to confirm Roosevelt's most anxious suspicions. Philander C. Knox, a leading U.S. diplomat, exclaimed that the effort to buy this "enormous tract of land in Lower California"

was "certain . . . to cause a great outcry."¹¹² It did. Tokyo might have gotten this idea from Germany, since earlier the "Emperor of Germany in his individual capacity" wanted to buy all of Baja California. But purchase was not their only option. For "in 1916 the [U.S] Office of Naval Intelligence expressed concern that the Governor of Baja California, Esteban Cantu, might be planning a breakaway republic under Japanese protection." Simultaneously, "two dozen of the more vocal Japanese residents of Baja . . . issued a 'manifesto'" that spoke openly of "the similarity of anti-American attitudes in Mexico to those in Japan." This was "widely quoted in Latin American newspapers."¹¹³

Behind the scenes, U.S. Military Intelligence was monitoring Japanese activity south of the border and did not like what it saw and heard. In 1918 they wondered about the "unusual attention" that "has been shown the Mexicans by the Japanese. . . . There have been several conferences and banquets with Japanese officials. The Japanese Government permitted them to visit the government arsenals, military and naval academies and private factories capable of turning out military supplies and apparently every opportunity was given them to study the manufactures of munitions." The reason for Mexico's interest was obvious: "supply of war munitions, particularly machine guns and small arms." Why was it, thought the U.S. analyst, that "all the Mexicans connected with the mission have been openly hostile to the United States and have been insisting in their talk with the Japanese that the United States is a 'big tyrant' and is constantly interfering with the liberties of Mexico."¹¹⁴ This was just one more bit of evidence signifying closer Japan-Mexico ties.¹¹⁵

Japan was explicitly mentioned in the Plan.¹¹⁶ According to Senator Albert Fall, "several Japanese officers were implicated. One of them, using the cover name of 'Pablo Nago' was an intermediary in the Plan" and was to provide funding "to be used in subverting black troops on the border."¹¹⁷ Even after that ambitious project was derailed, similar plans proceeded apace. In 1919 a Senate aide claimed that not only had "German rifles, German ammunition and a German iron cross" been found after a fierce battle on the border but, as well, "several Japs [*sic*] were making bombs . . . publicly" for this fight. Indeed, "they raided this country at least twenty times from Laredo to Brownville."¹¹⁸ The U.S. government could not help but notice that the "Japanese in Mexico were not the targets of the anti-foreign hatred directed at most other nationalities." The Chinese were targeted, so it was not as if all Asians were getting a pass in the name of "colored" unity. Further, one analysis suggests that Mexico "was using

the Germans by letting them appear responsible for fomenting the Plan of San Diego, while in reality" it was Tokyo that was behind this plot.¹¹⁹

From the Bureau of Investigation in Los Angeles in 1919 came the news that "Japan is planning trouble with Mexico against the United States and . . . within the next twelve months they are planning [war] in California." The "Japs [*sic*] are promising certain things to the colored people on this coast if they will join in with Japan and Mexico when the trouble is begun here in California." This bit of intelligence came from a "certain colored man" who had "been displaying a revolver." When queried as to why, he replied "that he had it to shoot up any fresh white fellows with in the event anything was started in this city at any time." A "bootblack" in Los Angeles had told George Holman, the government agent, that Tokyo "had been making overtures to the Negroes to side with them and that in a year or so they would take California and that when they did the Negroes would be treated right."¹²⁰ Even after Carranza had been dislodged and Jack Johnson repatriated, Tokyo kept up a heavy barrage of "racial" propaganda.¹²¹

Negroes responded to the propaganda, tending to conjoin the fates of Mexico and Japan with themselves as the united "colored" standing foursquare against white supremacy. *The Crusader*, a militant "race" journal, "boldly declared that in the event of a conflict between the United States and Japan or a possible clash with Mexico, African Americans were duty bound 'NOT TO FIGHT AGAINST JAPAN OR MEXICO'" (emphasis in original). The Negro who did, it said, "is fighting for the white man against himself, for the white race against the darker races and for the perpetuation of white domination of the colored races."¹²² *The Messenger* of A. Philip Randolph cited prominently the words of a Japanese publication that criticized lynching: "It is an indelible stain . . . on the name of America that in this enlightened age such crimes should take place." This militant publication wanted to cultivate Tokyo: "The Japanese people must be made to believe that America aims to subjugate them, segregate them, lynch and burn and mob them because they are colored." This focus on lynching will "inspire the Japanese masses with the fatalistic determination never to come under the yoke of American imperialism. Next, it will create discontent with Americans on the part of that portion of the population—the Negroes."¹²³

Translating words into action Randolph allied himself with Shuroku Kuroiwa, "the Japanese William Randolph Hearst," who "expressed 'his unqualified and genuine approval of the darker peoples making common

cause against the common enemy—race prejudice based upon color.' Randolph entrusted [the] 'Memorandum of Peace Proposals' to Kuroiwa who promised that the question of race would be raised at Versailles." The black socialist and the Negroes allied with him desired an "'International Commission of Darker Peoples' made of educated blacks and Asians [to] give technological advice to developing countries and monitor interference in their affairs by industrial nations."¹²⁴

The Los Angeles-based *California Eagle* expressed the sentiments of numerous Negroes in a front-page banner headline: "Japan to Lead Fight for Rights of Colored Races." Further reference was made to the "enterprising and wonderful Japs [*sic*]." ¹²⁵ Negroes in California were said to be adopting Japanese customs such as the elaborate ritual of the "Japanese wedding."¹²⁶ Negroes took heart from the fierce "protest of the Japanese Association of Southern California against the showing of the moving picture film, *The Cheat*," viewed as "obnoxious to the Japanese." The *California Eagle* invidiously compared the less successful protest against *Birth of a Nation* and added, "The nation itself, as well as the state, have been known to BACK UP [*sic*] when Japan gets busy."¹²⁷ Repeatedly this west coast paper raised the specter of Japan. "The influx of Japanese in this country today," it argued, "is due to the efforts of the Americans who sought to paralyze Negro energies and enterprise." Illustrating graphically the crisis of white supremacy, it added, "Suppose the Japanese should make up their minds to invade and rampage this country . . . the American white man will learn by bitter precept that he who digs a pit for another is the first to fall therein."¹²⁸

Irving Goff McCann, the writer, like many in the United States was irate about Japan's western hemisphere campaign. Presciently, in 1917 he declared, "I will wager . . . that within twenty-five years the United States of America and Japan will clinch in one of the bitterest wars in history. . . . The safety of our country and of the white race depends" on subduing Nippon. Upon the resolution of this war would turn the "question of which race shall inhabit the globe."¹²⁹

Japan's alliance with Mexico and dalliance with Negroes seemed to inspire all manner of pontificating. On the floor of the House, Congressman William H. Murray of Oklahoma argued passionately that "whether Mexico is to become a white man's country or to [fall] under the control and domination of Asiatic races" depended on prompt U.S. action. "It may ultimately determine not only the perpetuity of our own Republic but the civilization of the Aryan race."¹³⁰

Negroes also weighed the effect of these global conflicts on "race," albeit from a different perspective. In 1920 Hubert Harrison, the Harlem radical, recalled that "as far back as 1915 the present writer was engaged in pointing out to white people that the racial aspect of the war in Europe was easily the most important despite the fact that no American paper, not even Mr. Hearst's, would present that side of the matter for the consideration of the readers. . . . Now, however, they are beginning to wake up—as people generally do when disaster is upon them—frantically with much screaming and flapping of arms. But, in such cases, the doom approaching is but the ripened results of deeds that have been done, and is, therefore, absolutely inescapable."¹³¹

Irving P. Roswell, the financier and confidante to Senator Fall, took such words quite seriously. As he saw it in 1920, "Japan's intentions," aided by Germany, were "to have Mexican soldiers invade California within twelve months' time . . . to be helped by Germans now in Mexico," along with Japan itself and "the Pacific Coast Negroes. I have reason to believe that at least some of the Negroes held arms [and] they had been promised . . . certain independent republics" in the Plan.¹³² The military authorities had a "photograph" that they claimed to be a depiction "of [a] camp of 20,000 armed Japanese who were embarking for Sonora for [the] purpose of combining with Villa against the United States."¹³³ The prospect of Japanese troops pouring across the border, accompanied by Mexicans, had seized the public imagination to the point where William Randolph Hearst produced a film with this theme.¹³⁴ Presumably, were this to actually occur, Negro troopers would be left in the breach to defend the nation—once again.

EPILOGUE

Revolution Delayed

By 1920 Jack Johnson had turned himself in to the U.S. authorities, prepared to spend a stretch behind bars. His patron, Carranza, who had fomented such turmoil along the border, had been dislodged. Germany had been defeated in war, though Japan had emerged relatively unscathed, ready to continue its campaign to “play the race card” in a manner that trivialized all subsequent uses of this aphorism. White supremacy in the United States appeared to have emerged victorious. But the conflict between national security and white supremacy was to yield decisively in favor of national security a few decades later.¹ Undoubtedly the accumulated pressures brought on by the Mexican Revolution were an integral part of this process.

Furthermore, the forces unleashed by the revolutionary process continued to be felt on the border, in both nations, and particularly among Negroes themselves. In 1922 the boxing promoter James W. Coffroth of San Francisco sought to arrange a match in Mexico between Jack Johnson and the rising fighter, Jack Dempsey. Why there of all places? “Because Johnson had a tremendous following in Mexico and would draw a record crowd,” concluded the *New York Times*.²

Johnson’s counterpoint, Henry O. Flipper, was not viewed as fondly south of the border—and the feeling was reciprocated. In 1923 he was in

Venezuela, another oil-rich Latin American nation, and continued to file detailed intelligence reports for his patron, Albert Fall, the oily New Mexico politician then caught up in the Teapot Dome scandal. Now he was working for another oilman, William F. Buckley, Sr. "The better class of people," he opined, "are whiter than the Mexican and descended from Spaniards from the north of Spain where German or Dutch blood predominated." "The most surprising thing to me on the entire trip was the number of Negroes and mulattoes in San Juan, Curacao and here in Caracas." Generally, he found the folk in Venezuela "superior to" Mexicans. As for the Indians there, "little or nothing has been done to dominate or exterminate them," he concluded with what seemed like a tinge of sadness.³

However, Flipper, a black man, was not unreservedly embraced by those he purported to serve. His patron, Senator Fall, was "very deeply concerned" about him. He had known the former solidier "for thirty years" and deemed him a "master of the Spanish language without superior. . . . He does all my Spanish translating and, in addition thereto, translates from the French technical oil articles, books, pamphlets, etc." Yet, his brilliance aside, Fall thought his "life is a most pathetic one." He was the prototype of the marginal man. "By education, by experience and because of his natural high intellectual characteristics, he can find no pleasure in association with many of his own race and because of his color he was and is precluded in this country from enjoying the society of those whom he would be mentally and otherwise best fitted to associate with."⁴ Of course, neither the senator nor Flipper himself contemplated seeking to alter the Jim Crow regime so that Flipper's formidable talents could flower. Perhaps the senator was preoccupied with his own problems. The Mexican Revolution had a "disastrous effect on Fall's fortune" as he was to "suffer substantial losses," which "would make him the Senate expert on that revolutionary land,"⁵ ably assisted by Flipper. His losses in Mexico were followed up by the scandal known as Teapot Dome and his fortune—and that of his protégé, Flipper—plummeted precipitously.

Many Negroes did not appear to share Flipper's negative appraisal of Mexico, which remained popular as a place of refuge. "A delegation of Negro leaders met with Mexican President Alvaro Obregon" in 1922 to discuss emigration; he "cordially invited the Negroes to settle in his country."⁶ The following year, Chandler Owen, the Negro radical, was on a lecture tour in southern California. While there he was the "guest of prominent attorneys who [took] him on a trip into Mexico for a first hand study of economic conditions there."⁷ He may have learned of the

International Community Welfare League, a “black-owned and operated real estate concern with offices in Los Angeles, Mexico City and Okmulgee, Oklahoma” who “claimed settlement rights to over 450,000 acres in three Mexican states.”⁸

Soon the press was teeming with stories about how “white oil interests are alarmed at acquisitions of Mexican oil lands by Negro syndicates” and the concomitant “migration of thousands of colored farmers to the Mexican Republic.” Some colonists “[had] gone to the Santa Clara Valley district on the west coast of Mexico about 200 miles below Los Angeles.”⁹ An incident in 1923, one of many, illustrated the reasons for Negro emigration. Clarence Smith, a Negro, “stabbed himself and cut his throat . . . when a crowd which [had] collected outside the jail in which he [was] confined began clamoring for his life.”¹⁰ Yet this macabre event should be seen in conjunction with the efforts of U.S. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes to end the “frequent murders of Mexicans in Texas and other border states. . . . This condition was becoming intolerable” and “local authorities either connived at the murders” or “were actually guilty of the murders themselves.”¹¹ Negroes die—no great outcry from Washington. Mexicans die—great outcry from Washington. Some Negroes concluded from this simple juxtaposition of facts that not only would they be better off in Mexico but that Mexican citizenship would offer better protection than U.S. citizenship if they were threatened with harm when visiting relatives left behind in, say, Texas.

Then there was a backlash. Under pressure from Dixiecrats, Mexico moved to limit Negro emigration.¹² Soon, unlike other U.S. citizens, Negroes could not enter Mexico unless they could prove that they owned property in Mexico or secured the Mexican government’s consent and furnished a bond that they would leave at a specified time. Black Ministers in Los Angeles and the NAACP protested vigorously but Mexico found it hard to stand up to U.S. pressure.¹³ It was also said that Mexico wanted to “whiten” its population and found Negro emigration—not to mention vindicating the rights of indigenous people—inconsistent with this goal.¹⁴ Marcus Garvey’s *Negro World* had a different opinion. This policy of limiting Negro entrance was not “due to prejudice against the race.” Instead, Mexico was “exceedingly watchful and suspicious of Tio Sam’s Negro citizen,” not because “the Negroes themselves have any evil designs” but because the United States might use their presence as a pretext to intervene in Mexico as it had done during the revolutionary decade, memories of which were both fresh and painful.¹⁵

Negro troopers had been a shield against, but also participants in, that earlier turmoil. In the 1920s they continued to be a troublesome and contradictory presence. One writer has unearthed a "well-armed alliance of black war veterans and black gangsters" who "ferociously defended Washington's black community against a large invading white mob" in the postrevolutionary era.¹⁶ Yet along the two-thousand-mile-long border separating the United States from Mexico, a Negro privilege that had once caused them to be viewed as functionally "white" began to fade into various shades of gray and off-black.

The Negro troopers of Fort Huachuca experienced the difference on Mayday 1923. This citadel of resistance to Native American and Mexican forays had faded in importance since the revolutionary days of a few years earlier. As workers around the globe celebrated, "another raid on the notorious" and ironically named "White City section" occurred nearby. "Thirteen civilian male denizens of the district, all colored, were arrested and over 25 soldiers," though "many made their getaway." A number of "gambling games were in progress and money, chips and cards went every direction when the alarm was given, and everyone, including the women, scurried to the brush. . . . Officers found hundreds of empty bottles." This was just "one of the many raids to be made" in this neighborhood which had "given much trouble to both county and military authorities," but was now being downsized.¹⁷

In 1922 Henry Burton, manager of the Columbus, New Mexico Telephone Company, was complaining about Negro troopers to his U.S. senator. "A very few years ago," he said, "this county was almost solid Democratic. [In] the last two elections we have shown remarkable gains." However, Negro troopers had attracted camp followers and other civilians. "We have in this precinct about four hundred Negro voters, that is mostly civilian Negroes that are property owners and perfectly legal voters. Heretofore, the Democrats . . . have consistently refused to allow these Negroes to vote, [so] that at the last election we lost this precinct by only four votes, without any Negro votes." What was to be done? "Of course, the Democrats are hoping and praying that this [Negro] . . . regiment will be moved and replaced by new men before [the] election. Because in that event most of the civilian Negroes would go also. The Colonel here and General Howze and all the El Paso politicians are working to that end from the same motive."¹⁸ Since the border had quieted down, the Negro troopers had become a dispensable luxury, and, in the short term, attending to Negro interests had become less of a priority.

In 1926 there was a disturbing report from Yuma, Arizona, about “thirty-five Negroes, most of them with families [who] feel they were cheated out of their money.” The Negroes were “induced . . . to pay” a swindler “one dollar an acre [for] desert land,” where they were told a “gin” would be constructed for “their cotton.” “This has not been done.” They expected a school to be built too. “This has not been done.” These were a “better class of Negroes, honest and upright, and of the devout religious convictions” who lost a “large part of their savings.”¹⁹ But Negroes in general had lost their cachet along the border since the end of the Revolution. Their status began to resemble that of their compatriots in the rest of the country.

Mrs. M. R. Peralta of Tempe, Arizona, a Mexican American, had a different concern, namely, that Mexican Americans like herself were being treated like Negroes. She told the governor that “our children are separated from the American children, as if they were Negroes. They may do it with them, [for] they have been slaves, but we have not been anybody’s slaves.”²⁰ The governor responded that there was “little” he could do about this kind of school segregation.²¹ But this infuriated her even more. “The way it looks,” she replied, “our citizenship avails us nothing. It’s only when we are needed, when war calls that we [are] reminded that we are citizens, then we count, or when [an] election is here. Then we are not looked on as dirty greasers or just Mexicans, then we are equals.” Mrs. Peralta declared that “my children and my faith have received a great shock,” she reminded the governor that “the time may come when they [Chicanos] may be needed. Do you think they will go with a willing heart, or that I will be proud to see them go with the same people by whom they were looked down upon.” But Mrs. Peralta recognized that “everything would crash around you if you did [help] just because you helped the despised Mexicans.”²²

She had a point. Now that the border warfare had declined and there was less concern about national security, the U.S. authorities felt they could ignore the minorities. But this only put off the day of reckoning, for how would the minorities feel when another national security crisis arose, as in World War II, the Cold War, and the “war against terrorism”?

The upheaval along the border, Carrizal, and all the rest had bequeathed a legacy of bitterness in both nations. Years later, Negroes were still being victimized by events that had transpired decades earlier. In 1936 Gilbert Mers, the Texas trade union leader, explained that “all longshore work” in Brownsville was done by white labor, contrary to many neighboring

ports, because “some years ago Negro cavalymen stationed at Fort Brown out of Brownsville, staged a riot through that city. Ever since, the populace bars Negroes from the city. When the [union] organized, whites and Negroes alike were taken in the organization in separate locals. These Negroes live in Harlingen, some 20 miles inland” and “administrations in Port Isabel and Brownsville have refused to allow Negroes to enter the cities. There probably never will be colored labor on the docks of those cities,” he concluded, “unless shipping interests should be able to prevail on the powers-that-be to use them as strikebreakers in event of a tie-up.”²³ Negroes’ only choices were those of being excluded altogether or becoming a “scab.” This showed how perilous their survival along the border had become.

Mexico’s representatives were not faring well either, although they were doing Washington’s bidding and had stopped “racial” guerilla warfare along the border. They were being deprived of the simplest diplomatic courtesies. Joaquin Terrazas, the Mexican Consul in Phoenix, was “threatened over the telephone with violence, unless [he] removed the Mexican flag from the Mexican Consulate.” He had “refused to fly the American flag above the Mexican flag” on Cinco de Mayo, the fifth of May, the holiday marking the assault on French rule in the nation. This simple gesture almost led to the lynching of this patriotic diplomat.²⁴

Japan, Mexico’s close ally in the halcyon days of border unrest, fared little better. In the interwar era, a black newspaper “perceived the current ‘yellow peril’ race-baiting . . . as ‘hogwash’ that was ‘raised against [the] Japanese in the same manner and with as much justice or rather lack of justice, as the cry of ‘rapists’ is raised against Negroes.’” In Los Angeles there was opposition to those of Japanese origin integrating certain neighborhoods since it was “claimed”—in a reflection of earlier border skirmishes—“that an influx of Japanese would herald the invasion of Negroes and Mexicans to follow, destroying [the] suburban character of the West-side area and driving down property values.”²⁵

But unlike the Mexicans and certainly unlike Negroes, the Japanese were backed by a powerful state that was not adverse to challenging boldly the prevailing racist order. The consequences of this were brought home to Arizona State Senator Thomas Collins by one of his constituents. In 1935, I. L. Shauer, who had “just returned from Japan where [he had] been living for the past fifteen years” told him that “the bombings of the Japanese in [the] Salt River Valley last summer and fall resounded across the Pacific.” Passing a law circumscribing the property rights of those of

Japanese origin “would be very inopportune . . . while there is so much tension in the Orient. As you know,” he reminded Senator Collins, who represented farmers, “Japan is our best customer, and it does seem unwise to do anything that would arouse animosity or ill will with a friendly customer.”²⁶

Tokyo was hardly appeased. For even in the 1930s Washington still feared a Japan-Mexico alliance. A former high-level military man in Mexico City proclaimed that in case of war between the United States and Japan, “Mexico would . . . become the ally of Japan due to the hatred” between Washington and its neighbor. “That not only Mexico but Peru, Chile, Argentina, Honduras, Guatemala, Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Colombia and Venezuela—countries which have reason to dislike the United States—would also ally themselves with Japan,”²⁷ was reflective, said the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, of “existing friendly relations between Mexico and Japan,” including “closer contact between the Japanese Naval and Military attaches and the Mexican War Department.”²⁸

Like Japan, African Americans continued to look to Mexico as a counterweight against the United States. Eighty-three-year-old Joe Ray of Muskogee, Oklahoma, a former slave, was interviewed in the late 1930s as the dark clouds of war gathered over the Pacific. He had a brother in “Tampico, Mexico. [That’s] where I want to go for I [am] afraid the Japs [*sic*] is coming over here and I [am] too feeble to dodge stray balls!” Lucinda Vann, another former slave, like many Negroes along the border frequently traveled back and forth to Mexico, despite tightened immigration restrictions.²⁹

Yet despite such contacts, when World War II began an “Afro-American news agency” asked the Mexican Embassy in Washington questions that betrayed a decided lack of knowledge on both sides, unlike the situation during the revolutionary era. “Have any person of Negro blood ever held any high office in Mexico?” the agency asked, apparently unaware of the stories about Vicente Guerrero. Discreetly and diplomatically, the embassy evaded the pointed query as to whether the United States had “ever sent a colored man down in Mexico on a government mission.”³⁰ The point was that among Negroes, memories of a time when Mexico was seen as a friend to Negroes and a foe to white supremacy had virtually disappeared.

Thus, when Adolph Newton, a black sailor, arrived on the border near Tijuana during World War II, “the first thing I did was to ask some of the Negro sailors what life was like for Negroes in San Diego. They said it ‘wasn’t shit’; they called San Diego ‘Little Georgia.’ I went into town and

found that they had told the truth. As I walked around the main street I saw signs in almost every window with the words 'No Colored Allowed.' A sign in one window said 'No Sailors, Dogs, or Colored Allowed.'"³¹ Newton would have been astonished to learn that Negroes in that region once might have been deemed to be virtually "white."

On the other hand, African American artists and some of their counterparts in Mexico continued to enjoy a warm embrace. When Richard Wright traveled to Mexico in the 1940s he reported that "people of all races and colors live in harmony and without racial prejudices or theories of racial superiority." He "added that he only ever experienced racism when he came into contact with American tourists or businessmen." But things changed dramatically when his train reached Brownsville, Texas. "The whites were ushered into one coach and Wright, the only Negro on the train, into another. The conductor motioned some Mexicans into the carriage with Wright, but made them sit at the other end. 'Mexicans seemed to hover somewhere [between] white people and Negroes.'"³² Or, to put it another way, keeping Negroes and Mexicans apart certainly forestalled a replay of their earlier unity.

Langston Hughes was an even greater devotee of Mexico than Richard Wright. His father had lived there for years and was a fan of the Revolution; it had "done more good for this country than the thirty years peaceful reign of Porfirio Diaz and the Indian has taken advantage of his changed condition to improve himself."³³ Embittered by his experience of Jim Crow, Hughes the elder continued to compare his new home favorably to his old. When the activist Louise Patterson came to see him in Mexico, she "lit a cigarette, lit it and began to smoke and didn't have manners enough to offer me one." "You know manners," he sniffed, "such as they are, is the principal thing in [Mexico] and elsewhere, except in the U.S."³⁴ During the Great Depression, when he tried to interest his son in living there, he told him that "Mexico is suffering from the crisis like other countries but it is not half as bad as in the U.S."³⁵

Certainly that was true for James Nathaniel Hughes, fluent in Spanish, who owned a large ranch in the Mexican mountains and resided in a fashionable "Toluca house." For him, the United States was "so much sandpaper on his nerves." Although his son turned down the attractive offer to live south of the border, the younger Hughes was "impressed by the vitality of Mexican art and culture." He thought "he could go on staying here for years so much did he love Mexico." "Here," he rejoiced, "nothing is

barred from me. I am among my own people for . . . Mexico is a brown man's country."³⁶

The renowned Mexican painter Jose Clemente Orozco also crossed the border. In his autobiography he recalled his stay in New York City as the Harlem Renaissance was gaining ground. Like David Siquieros, yet another talented painter from Mexico, he was taken by the "proximity of . . . blacks and Hispanic Americans" in various neighborhoods. Miguel Covarrubias was among the Mexican artists who drew upon and contributed to this ongoing relationship between Mexicans and African Americans. Similarly, the "Mexican murals that influenced the work of African-American artists first began to appear in the United States in the 1930s." The black painter Sargent Johnson "made several trips to Mexico from 1945 to 1965." Hale Woodruff studied there, and Charles White traveled there.³⁷ Similarly, during the days of the Renaissance the "hottest gin mill" in Harlem, said Duke Ellington, was—appropriately—"Mexico's . . . run by a fellow named Gomez, who was from one of the Carolinas, according to Willie Smith, and had never actually seen Mexico."³⁸

This was characteristic of the mutually beneficial relationship between Mexico and African American musicians. Baja California needs to be added to Paris and Tokyo as places that welcomed black musicians in exile. The Newport Bar in Tijuana was decorated "ala 'King Tut' style" with large mirrors and fourteen plush rooms on the second floor.³⁹ There was every kind of band in "T.J.," said Billy Tucker of a city that was "Las Vegas" before Las Vegas, "not least bands of our own race."⁴⁰

The epitome of this trend was embodied in Charles Mingus, bassist extraordinaire, of Nogales, Arizona—and the world. For Orson Welles, Jackson Pollock, Jack Kerouac, Mingus, "and other American artists . . . Mexico represented the Other, North America's prickly Latin underbelly with a history of revolution and repression. . . . For Mingus, Mexico was a musical release and challenge. He loved the Spanish guitars, the clipped rhythms, the yearning operatic voices." A poignant coda was Joni Mitchell including in the liner notes of her album *Mingus* a "piece from a Mexican newspaper about fifty-six whales beaching themselves on the Mexican coast the day Mingus died."⁴¹

Dizzy Gillespie also exemplified this tradition. In 1967 his "regular group stirred itself . . . to make a visit to Mexico for a one-off Mexico City Jazz Festival." "Fascinated as ever by a new country and its sounds, he got out and about to hear the local music. He was tempted into an

impromptu open-air concert in the streets near the festival with a brightly clad band of local mariachi musicians, as usual winning over their hearts with his informality and sheer musicality.”⁴²

Negro baseball players were similarly taken with Mexico. Willie Wells, the “three-time U.S. Negro League batting champion, explained why he loved playing in Veracruz. . . . ‘Not only do I get more money playing here,’” he explained, “but I live like a king.” Most important, he added, “I am not faced with the racial problem. . . . I’ve found freedom and democracy here, something I never found in the United States. . . . Here in Mexico, I am a man.”⁴³ The star player Ray Dandridge was also a fan of Veracruz, just as Brooklyn Dodgers catcher Roy Campanella once played for Monterrey.⁴⁴ Not surprisingly, when a major milestone in sports was reached when an all-black five defeated an all-white team in the national collegiate basketball championship in 1966, the team that took this bold move, transforming the landscape in sports and thereby the nation, hailed from the border: the school we now know as the University of Texas, El Paso.⁴⁵

Political dissidents from the United States continued to flock to Mexico. Perhaps the freer atmosphere there helps to explain why in 1968 black American athletes chose the Olympics in Mexico City for their riveting protest against racism, just as black Californian Marvin X moved there around the same time. Like legions before him, he was fleeing the draft and a sticky political battle at Fresno State University that had Governor Ronald Wilson Reagan breathing down his neck. His first stop was the home of the fabulous sculptress and artist, Elizabeth Catlett. This African American had become a Mexican citizen in 1964 after being an exile for years, having communed with David Siquieros and Frida Kahlo. She told Mr. X correctly, “Mexico has always given refuge to revolutionaries from around the world,” including herself. He also encountered “Elijah Muhammad’s grandsons” who chose exile there as well.⁴⁶

But while African Americans were streaming into Mexico, a veritable flood was coming in the other direction. The Revolution was one of the primary hemispheric “expulsionary forces of major dimensions,” altering the character of cities all along the border and the Midwest.⁴⁷ By 2001 Los Angeles, the nation’s second largest city in the largest state, had been transformed. The 2000 census “numbers show that the African-American population in Los Angeles County fell by 3.6% from 1990 to 2000, while the numbers of Latinos,” particularly those of Mexican origin, grew spectacularly. Some adjusted. Thus, Reverend Mark Whitlock, who started a multi-

cultural church within the historically black A.M.E. denomination, had a congregation in 1999 that was about 60 percent African Americans but increasingly was taking on Spanish-speaking worshippers. He “recalibrated his sermons to speak less specifically on African-American themes and more broadly on such topics as racial reconciliation.”⁴⁸

Others did not adapt as well as the cleric. I recall being in Los Angeles in early June 2001. The polls had been showing that the progressive Mexican American candidate for mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa, was doing badly among African American voters, a typical bulwark for those of his ideological persuasion. Scuttlebutt had it that black voters were leery about the influx of Mexicans into Los Angeles and saw this candidate’s rise as symbolic of their own decline. I scoffed at these notions but recall driving down Crenshaw Boulevard, tuning my car radio to election returns and being stunned to hear that black voters were casting their ballots heavily in favor of the ultimate winner, James Hahn, a less progressive Euro-American. They promptly accused him of betrayal after he refused to renew the contract of a popular black police chief, Bernard Parks.⁴⁹

Of course, some African Americans hinted—often asserted—that Mexicans were not free of “racial” bias. This helps to explain the often acrimonious relationship between these two largest U.S. minorities in some cities. Or so it was said. They point to the recent campaign against the spouse of Lazaro Cardenas, himself the son and grandson of two of Mexico’s most beloved heroes. Mayra Coffigny, a classical ballerina and a native of Cuba, is “black.” Her skin, “the color of café con leche, marked her as a foreigner.” As one of her opponents put it, “It’s one thing to be brown. The black race is something different.”⁵⁰

But just as African Americans historically drew distinctions between Mexico and Japan on the one hand and Mexican Americans and Japanese Americans on the other—finding it easier to get along with these faraway nations than with close-by neighbors⁵¹—it is possible, perhaps probable, that Mexicans draw a distinction between “Afro-Mexicans” and “African-Cubans.” Then again, there were negative influences in Mexico that complicated race relations. Euro-Americans were a significant export from the United States to Mexico. Diana Arnhalt recalls that in the 1950s among her classmates at the American School in Mexico City were a “select few descended from former plantation owners fleeing the United States—with their slaves—following the Civil War.” They “hated Mexico.” Chris Trumbo recalls that “at some schools they had cowboys and Indians. Here

... they divided up into the Confederacy and Union, and it was considered really chic to be part of the Confederacy.”⁵²

Confederates aside, Mexico remains a symbol for black refuge and liberation, a symbol that required little explanation in the 1999 film by the popular comedian Martin Lawrence. In *Blue Streak*, this African American escapes with a fortune to the border. As the film ends, the U.S. authorities are hot on his trail, almost literally breathing down his neck, while the laughing Lawrence steps across the border into the liberated territory of Baja California—in a reversal of the journey of Jack Johnson eight decades earlier—and skips gaily toward a happy ending.⁵³

Notes

NOTES TO THE PREFACE

1. See Patrick Carroll, *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity and Regional Development*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991.

2. For a perspective on the challenges posed by an influx of Mexicans into the United States in the aftermath of the Revolution, see Zaragosa Vargas, *Proletarians of the North: A History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917–1933*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, 48–49. See also Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African-Americans in the American West, 1528–1990*, New York: Norton, 1998.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. Terminology is inevitably imprecise when referring to large groups of people. I will use the term Chicano to refer to those of Mexican origin in the borderlands; Mexican Americans to refer generally to those of Mexican origin in the United States; “Latinos” and “Hispanics” to refer to those in the western hemisphere whose roots lie in the former Spanish colonial empire; “Anglos” to refer to those in the United States termed “non-Hispanic whites”; “Negroes” and “blacks” to refer to those in the United States today called “African American.”

2. *New York Sun*, 21 July 1920.

3. *New York Times*, 21 July 1920.
4. See 1919 advertisement from *The Messenger* in Theodore Vincent, ed., *Voices of a Black Nation: Political Journalism in the Harlem Renaissance*, San Francisco: Ramparts Press, 1973, 260.
5. *Valdosta Daily Times*, 26 December 1976.
6. See Lindley M. Garrison, U.S. Secretary of War, "An Outline of the Proposed Military Policy," 1 November 1915, Series II, Folder 7, *Lindley M. Garrison Papers*, *New Jersey Historical Society*, Newark: "At the present time appropriations are available for the maintenance of an army . . . [of] 5,023 officers and 102,985 enlisted men. Of these 67,000 men are mobile army troops, 20,000 are coast defense troops . . . about 29,000 are on service outside [the] continental United States, leaving therein about 46,000 mobile army troops and about 13,000 coast defense troops. . . . The Organized Militia in the various States has an enrollment of approximately 129,000 men and officers." In this and other speeches, the secretary complained frequently about what he saw as the relatively small size of the military. This increased the importance of Negro troopers, who tended to stay with the force longer and become more experienced because of a dearth of opportunity elsewhere. See also Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All! Foreign Born Soldiers in World War I*, College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2001.
7. *Atlanta Constitution*, 18 December 1976.
8. *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 March 1977. See also *New York Times*, 4 May 1977.
9. *Savannah Morning News*, 19 February 1998.
10. Newt Gingrich to Paul N. Carlin, Postmaster of the United States, 30 January 1986, Vertical File, Henry O. Flipper, *Georgia Historical Society*, Savannah.
11. *Savannah Morning News*, 19 February 1998.
12. Peter V. N. Henderson, *Mexican Exiles in the Borderlands, 1910–1913*, El Paso: Texas Western University Press, 1979, 34.
13. Harry Henning, Attorney General, to Governor, 10 April 1916, Serial No. 10880, *Adjutant General Papers*, *New Mexico State Records Center and Archives*, Santa Fe.
14. Attorney General to General A. L. Mills, 25 April 1914, Serial No. 10877, *Adjutant General Papers*, *New Mexico State Records and Archives*, Santa Fe.
15. Report by Mexican Consul in El Paso, 27 April 1914, 17–5–117, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores*, *Archivo Historico*, Mexico City, Mexico. Reports from other consuls are part of this same file. All translations are by the author, unless otherwise indicated. Said the El Paso consul, "en los estados de Arizona, Nuevo Mexico, a pesar de que la mayoria de los Mexicanos son nativos dichos estados, conservan aun su patriotismo de raza. . . . ofreciendo emfatiamente tomar las armas." Said his counterpart in Phoenix, "algunas poseen rifles 30 x 30 pistoles; tambien que los indios ayudaran a Mexico; que un rancho Mexicano llamado Jose Palma, que reside en un rancho . . . dicho poblacion aseguro al Consul que el cuenta con no menos de 600 hombres armados, mas todas los Indios Yaquis . . . hubiera y hasta con algunos Papagos y Pimas . . . asegura que esta listo con su

gente para empezar last hostilidades en aquel mismo lugar, a la primera indicacion que se le haga.”

Briefly, he referred to the weapons pro-Mexican forces could wield and the probability that a number of Native American groups—who most definitely had longstanding grievances against Washington—would be only too willing to take up arms. Mexican consulates were a constant presence in the lives of those of Mexican origin in the United States. See Gilbert G. Gonzalez, *Mexican Consuls and Labor Organizing: Imperial Politics in the American Southwest*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999. Note particularly the literature review on pp. 3–10.

16. John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, 41.

17. Charles Shipman, *It Had to Be Revolution: Memoirs of an American Radical*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990, 56.

18. Daniel Herbert Botz, “‘Slackers’: American War Resisters and Communists in Mexico, 1917–1927,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1998, 91.

19. Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century*, New York: Metropolitan, 2000, 1.

20. David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001, 391.

21. See Fred Lee McGhee, “The Black Crop: Slavery and Slave Trading in Nineteenth Century Texas,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, 2000; Barbara Krauthamer, “Blacks on the Borders: African-Americans’ Transition from Slavery to Freedom in Texas and the Indian Territory, 1836–1907,” Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2000.

22. Daniel H. Calhoun, “Strategy as Lived: Mixed Communities in the Age of New Nations,” in James Brooks, ed., *Confounding the Color Line: The Indian-Black Experience in North America*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002, 108–134, 117. See also Elizabeth Arthur, “General Dickson and the Indian Liberating Army in the North,” *Ontario History*, 62 (1970): 151–162; Grace Lee Nute, “James Dickson: A Filibuster in Minnesota in 1836,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 10 (1923): 127–140. Dickson may have been Metis or part Indian.

23. See Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986.

24. Charles Lee Lewis, “Matthew Fontaine Maury: An International Figure,” *Southern Magazine*, 1 (Number 9, January 1935): 9–11, 10, 43. Maury was related via marriage to President Chester Arthur. Deemed a founder of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, he received “honors from universities, acclamation from nearly 50 learned societies, and decorations from emperors, kings and Pope Pius IX.” See James P. Reddick, “Herndon, Maury and the Amazon Basin,” *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, 97 (Number 3/817, March 1971): 56–633, 58. See also Frank A. Knapp, Jr., “A New Source on the Confederate Exodus to Mexico: The Two Republics,” *Journal of Southern History*, 19 (Number 3, August 1953): 364–373; Albert J.

Hanna, "A Confederate Newspaper in Mexico," *Journal of Southern History*, 12 (Number 1, February 1946): 67–83.

25. See John Hope Franklin, *George Washington Williams: A Biography*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1998, 5.

26. See John S. D. Eisenhower, *Intervention! The United States and the Mexican Revolution, 1913–1917*, New York: Norton, 1993, 212; Friedrich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States and the Mexican Revolution*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981, 339; Charles H. Harris and Louis R. Sadler, "The Plan of San Diego and the Mexican–United States War Crisis of 1916," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 58 (Number 3, 1978): 381–408; USA vs. Basilio Ramos, Jr., et al., "Indictment: Seditious Conspiracy," "A True Bill," 13 May 1915, U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas, Brownsville division, *National Archives and Records Administration, Fort Worth, Texas*. Japan was certainly aware of the "Plan of San Diego." See Undated document, unclear provenance, 1.2.2.2. *Diplomatic Archives of Japan, Tokyo*.

27. James D. Carrothers, "A Man They Didn't Know," *The Crisis*, 7 (Number 2, December 1913): 85–87, 86; see also Sutton Griggs, *Imperium in Imperio*, New York: Arno Press, 1969, 251.

28. *The Crisis*, 7 (Number 3, January 1914): 125.

29. James Carrothers, "A Man They Didn't Know," Part II, *The Crisis*, 7 (Number 3, January 1914): 136–138, 137.

30. See *Records of U.S. Army Overseas Operations and Commands, 1898–1942, World War I Organization Records, Punitive Expeditions to Mexico, Headquarters, 1916–1917, Carrizal Encounter*, Record Group 395, *National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

31. Horace Daniel Nash, "Town and Sword: Black Soldiers in Columbus, New Mexico in the Early Twentieth Century," Ph.D. dissertation, Mississippi State University, 1996, 312, 316.

32. Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., "Investigate Everything": *Federal Efforts to Compel Black Loyalty during World War I*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, 44.

33. See Gerald Horne, "Race from Power: U.S. Foreign Policy and the 'General Crisis of White Supremacy,'" *Diplomatic History*, 23 (Number 3, Summer 1999): 437–461. Reprinted in Michael Hogan, ed., *The Ambiguous Legacy: U.S. Foreign Policy in the "American Century"*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 302–331.

34. F. E. Shine to Dwight B. Heard, 17 November 1917, Film File 139.1.1, File 8, *Arizona Council of Defense Papers, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.

35. George H. Smalley to Miles Merrill, 6 November 1917, Film File 139.1.1, File 8, *Arizona Council of Defense Papers*, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix. Note the capitalization of "Colored Boys" at a time when a lower-case rendering of "Negro" was deeply resented by many of African descent. The reference to "their country," at a time when many on the other side of the "racial" divide fiercely disputed this characterization should be noted.

Notes to Chapter 1

36. *Nixon v. Herndon*, 273 U.S. 536 (1927).
37. *El Paso Evening Tribune*, 9 October 1893.
38. Oral History, Frances Hills, 12 October 1985, #751, *Archives of University of Texas, El Paso*.
39. *California Eagle*, 1 May 1914.
40. *California Eagle*, circa 8 May 1914 (date unclear).
41. Friedrich Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, 75.
42. Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea*, New York: Knopf, 1942, 15.
43. Hazel Rowley, *Richard Wright: The Life and Times*, New York: Holt, 2001, 197.
44. Gene Santoro, *Myself When I Am Real: The Life and Music of Charles Mingus*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, 10, 148, 383.
45. Report by Mexican consul in Calexico, 19 December 1919; Memorandum to Mexican consul, 19 January 1920, IV-736-10, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City, Mexico*. The consul reported that Pettigrew of the “raza negra” wanted to depart the United States since “el gobierno no les da ninguna proteccion legal. . . . maltratados con incontables insultes . . . contratos fraudulentos . . . linchados y quemados como un biftek al antojo, por los blancos del sur.” These families sought “otros lugares y mejores partes del mundo. . . . Estamos dispuestos y deseosos de nacionalizarnos ciudadanos mexicanos.” The government in Mexico City responded to the consul, “nuestro Gobierno permita la entrada a este pais a un grupo de treinta familias de raza negra.”

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. See Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999. See also Charles C. Colley, “The Desert Shall Blossom: North African Influence on the American Southwest,” *Western Historical Quarterly*, 14 (Number 3, July 1983): 277-290.
2. *Arizona Graphic*, 1 (Number 7, 18 October 1899): 1, *Arizona Historical Society, Tucson*.
3. Dr. Myra Ellen Jenkins to Phillip T. Drotning, 29 June 1967, History File, #78, “Blacks in New Mexico,” *New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe*.
4. Fray Angelico Chavez, “De Vargas’ Negro Drummer,” *El Palacio*, 56 (Number 5, May 1949): 131-138, 131, 133, 135.
5. Robert Lloyd Carlton, “Blacks in San Diego County, 1850-1900,” M.A. thesis, San Diego State University, 1977, 26.
6. Scott Tadao Kurashige, “Transforming Los Angeles: Black and Japanese American Struggles for Racial Equality in the 20th Century,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2000, 131.
7. Randolph B. Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821-1865*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989, 14.

8. Theodore G. Vincent, *The Legacy of Vicente Guerrero, Mexico's First Black Indian President*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001, 1, 152.
9. James Martin SoRelle, "The Darker Side of 'Heaven': The Black Community in Houston, Texas, 1917–1945," Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 1980, 8.
10. Ronnie C. Tyler and Lawrence R. Murphy, *The Slave Narratives of Texas*, Austin: Encino Press, 1974, 68.
11. See File 5–16–8599, 1833, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City, Mexico*: "La autoridades de Nueva Orleans desean hacer un arreglo con Mexico, para que los Norte Americanos pueden recobar a sus esclavos . . . les escapan . . . en territorio Mexicano."
12. See Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas, 1528–1971*, Austin: Jenkins Publishing Company, Pemberton Press, 1973. See also Rosalie Schwarz, *Across the Rio to Freedom: U.S. Negroes in Mexico*, El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1975.
13. J. A. Rogers, "Vicente Guerrero—Liberator of Mexico," *The Messenger*, 9 (Number 12, December 1927): 348, 360.
14. Elinor Wilson, *Jim Beckwourth: Black Mountain Man and Chief of the Crows*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972, 127.
15. James N. Leiker, *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002, 115, 24–25.
16. Fred Lee McGhee, "The Black Crop: Slavery and Slave Trading in Nineteenth Century Texas," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, 2000, 6, 194, 223, 251, 270, 350. The tireless Lundy also "received promises that he could colonize formerly enslaved blacks in Tamaulipas." Negroes were "attracted strongly by the idea of the Mexican colony." See Kevin Mulroy, *Freedom on the Border: The Seminole Maroons in Florida, the Indian Territory, Coahuila and Texas*, Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1993, 56, 63.
17. Vincent, *The Legacy of Vicente Guerrero*, 153.
18. Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveller's Observation on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States*, New York: Modern Library, 1984, 289–290.
19. Paul D. Lack, "Urban Slavery in the Southwest," *Red River Valley Historical Review*, 6 (Number 2, Spring 1981): 8–27, 21.
20. It was estimated that approximately 10 percent of these runaways were women. See Ruthe Winegarten, *Black Texas Women: 150 Years of Trial and Triumph*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995, 30.
21. James N. Leiker, "Racial Borders: Black Soldiers and Race Relations along the Rio Grande, 1866–1916," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1999, 56. See also Ronnie C. Tyler, "Fugitive Slaves in Mexico," *Journal of Negro History*, 57 (Number 1, January 1972): 1–12, 1, 2, 6: "Mexico provided a haven for Negroes who risked their lives to run away . . . in fact, [it] sheltered thousands of Negro fugitives by 1851." It was the filibuster, John Ford, who declared that "slaves are treated with more respect and more consideration than either Americans or Europeans."

22. Barbara Krauthamer, "Blacks on the Border: African-Americans' Transition from Slavery to Freedom in Texas and the Indian Territory, 1836–1907," Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2000, 45.
23. John D. Weaver, *The Brownsville Raid*, New York: Norton, 1970, 20.
24. Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002, 147, 153, 260, 261.
25. John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, 26, 91.
26. T. R. Fehrenbach, *Comanches: The Destruction of a People*, New York: Da Capo, 1994, 247, 291, 417.
27. Mulroy, *Freedom on the Border*, 63, 70. See also Michael Welsh, "The Road to Assimilation: The Seminoles in Oklahoma, 1839–1936," Ph.D. dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1983.
28. Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999, 225.
29. Roderick B. Patten, "Santo Flores: A Case of Mistaken Identity," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 48 (Number 4, Winter 1970–1971): 467–474, 467, 473.
30. Joseph A. Stout, Jr., *Schemers and Dreamers: Filibustering in Mexico, 1848–1921*, Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2002, 53.
31. Krauthamer, "Blacks on the Border," 50.
32. See Item 24–27, Bill of Sale for enslaved Negroes, and nearby items in MSS 193, *John Gay Papers*, University of New Mexico, Center for Southwest Research, Albuquerque.
33. Jim Garrett, "The Battles of Glorieta Pass and Apache Canyon: The Confederate Invasion of New Mexico, 25–28 March 1862," 5 December 1990, History File, #15, "Glorieta Pass/Pigeon Ranch," *New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe*.
34. Leiker, *Racial Borders*, 27.
35. Thomas Schoonover, "Napoleon Is Coming! Maximillian Is Coming? The International History of the Civil War in the Caribbean Basin," in Robert E. May, ed., *The Union, Confederacy and the Atlantic Rim*, West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1995, 101–130, 115.
36. *Savannah Daily Herald*, 2 August 1865.
37. See File, 1865, 10–21–73, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico*. Maury was seeking to reestablish Negro slavery in Mexico ("para establecer colonias de Negros y reestablecer asi la esclavitud en Mexico").
38. See Donald C. Simmons, Jr., *Confederate Settlements in British Honduras*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2001, 1, 16, 89, 122. After the overthrow of French rule, some of these Confederates migrated to the state known today as Belize; it was either that or "face severe retributions, including possibly, death." Jefferson Davis wanted the rebels to move to New Zealand, where the British were in the process of

fighting a white supremacist battle against the indigenous Maoris—a battle that ended in stalemate. It was difficult, in any case, for the traitors to the United States to accept life in Central America since “the concept of racial superiority, for example, was not given the legitimacy it held in the Old South. Nor were the violent acts committed by Confederates against those they considered socially inferior tolerated by the British Hondurans” or the Mexicans.

39. Leiker, “Racial Borders,” 109, 138, 146, 155.
40. Leiker, “Racial Borders,” 265.
41. Leiker, “Racial Borders,” 160. See also Alwyn Barr, “The Texas Black Uprising Scare of 1883,” *Phylon*, 41 (Number 2, Summer 1980): 179–186, 184.
42. Mulroy, *Freedom on the Border*, 117, 131.
43. Fehrenbach, *Comanches*, 498.
44. Gail Maydun and Larry Malone, “Black Pioneers in San Diego: 1880–1920,” *Journal of San Diego History*, 27 (Number 2, Spring 1981): 91–114, 95, 92.
45. Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea*, New York: Knopf, 1942, 15; Edward J. Mullen, ed., *Langston Hughes in the Hispanic World and Haiti*, Hamden: Archon Press, 1977, 21.
46. Alfred W. Reynolds, “The Alabama Negro Colony in Mexico, 1894–1896,” *Alabama Review*, 5 (Number 4, October 1952): 243–268, 243; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 12 August 1895.
47. Alfred W. Reynolds, “The Alabama Negro Colony in Mexico, 1894–1896,” Part II, *Alabama Review*, 6 (Number 1, January 1853): 31–58, 57.
48. J. Fred Rippy, “A Negro Colonization Project in Mexico, 1895,” *Journal of Negro History*, 6 (Number 1, January 1921): 66–73.
49. Louis R. Harlan et al., eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers, Volume 8, 1904–1906*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978, 405.
50. Edwin S. Redkey, *Black Exodus: Black Nationalist and Back-to-Africa Movements, 1890–1910*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, 187, 188.
51. Karl Jacoby, “Between North and South: The Alternative Borderlands of William H. Ellis and the African-American Colony, 1895,” 2001, unpublished paper in possession of the author.
52. Clipping, 26 August 1895, A014, Scrapbook A, *Charles Turner Scrapbooks, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis*.
53. Clipping, 19 November 1889, C192, *Charles Turner Scrapbooks, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis*.
54. Louis R. Harlan et al., eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers, Volume 7, 1903–1904*, 503.
55. Arnold Shankman, “The Image of Mexico and the Mexican-American in the Black Press, 1890–1935,” *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 3 (Number 2, Summer 1975): 43–56, 43, 45.
56. Report from Mexican Consul, White Plains, New York, 20 August 1894, 15–6–65, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*: “Un . . . Texano, A. J. Huston, ha concebido el proyecto de que los Estados Unidos comprar a Mexico

una faja del Territorio que confina con este pais, con el objeto de establecer a todas los Negros de los Estados Unidos, constituyendolos en un nacion independiente, y solicito de la convencion Republicana de Lily White que sancionara ese proyecto.” See also *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 8 August 1894.

57. Frederick Douglass Opie, “Adios Jim Crow: Afro-North American Workers and the Guatemalan Railroad Workers League, 1884–1921,” Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1999, 36, 55, 102, 146, 171, 216, 248, 252. See also “Original Manuscript Memoirs and Reminiscences of E. O. Crosby,” “American Minister Resident in Guatemala,” HM 284, *Huntington Library, San Marino, California*. Crosby, who was present in Guatemala in the late nineteenth century, discusses Negro colonization there.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. Larmar L. Kirven, “A Century of Warfare: Black Texans,” Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1974, 100.

2. Thomas E. Green to George Wickersham, 30 October 1912, Record Group 60, Department of Justice, Straight Numerical Files, File No. 164211, *National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland*.

3. Mita Jorgensen to President Taft, 8 February 1913, File no. 164211.

4. McReynolds, Department of Justice, to U.S. Attorney, Chicago, 27 June 1913, File No. 164211.

5. U.S. Attorney to U.S. Attorney General, 2 July 1913, File No. 164211.

6. George W. Harris to President Taft, 12 November 1912, File No. 164211.

7. Robert Lansing to Attorney General, 20 February 1915, File No. 164211.

8. Memorandum to Secretary of State, 1 March 1915, File No. 164211.

9. Ibid., Report from Consul General, 6 March 1915.

10. *New York Sun*, 17 February 1915.

11. *The Favorite Magazine* (Chicago), circa November 1919.

12. *New York Sun*, 25 February 1916.

13. *New York Sun*, 27 February 1916.

14. “George” to Lanier Winslow, Esq., to U.S. State Department, no date, Reel 17, #832, *Federal Surveillance of Afro-Americans (1917–1925): The First World War, the Red Scare and the Garvey Movement, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*. (These U.S. government documents will hereinafter be referred to as *Surveillance Papers*.)

15. “Physician’s Examination,” 19 September 1920, Record Group 129, Box 51, *National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland*.

16. Report from Military Attache, 18 January 1919, Record Group 65, *Investigative Files of the Bureau of Investigation, 1908–1922*, Reel 655, M1085, 242466, Bureau of Investigation, *National Archives and Records Administration, College Park*.

17. Military Attache to Director of Military Intelligence, 18 January 1919, Reel 23, #194, *Surveillance Papers*.

Notes to Chapter 2

18. Jack Johnson to Arturo Craven, 25 June 1918, Record Group 65, Reel 655, 242466, M 1085, *Investigative Files of the Bureau, 1908–1922, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland*.
19. Jack Johnson, *Jack Johnson—In the Ring—and Out*, Chicago: National Sports Publishing Company, 1927, 100.
20. Finis Farr, *Black Champion: The Life and Times of Jack Johnson*, London: Macmillan, 1964, 218.
21. *Chicago Defender*, 26 April 1919.
22. *Chicago Defender*, 7 June 1919.
23. *Chicago Defender*, 1 November 1919.
24. Thomas Cripps, *Slow Fade to Black: The Negro in American Film, 1900–1942*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, 18.
25. Alan M. Wald, *Exiles from a Future Time: The Forging of the Mid-Twentieth Century Left*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002, 51.
26. Charles Shipman, *It Had to Be Revolution: Memoirs of an American Radical*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, 79.
27. Farr, *Black Champion*, 218, 220.
28. *The Crisis*, 5 (Number 5, March 1913): 237.
29. Memorandum to Frank Burke of Bureau of Investigation, 18 October 1919, Record Group 65, Reel 655, M1085, 242466, *Investigative Files of the Bureau of Investigation, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland*.
30. Jack Johnson, *Jack Johnson Is a Dandy: An Autobiography*, New York: Chelsea House, 1969, 112.
31. Johnson, *Jack Johnson*, 112–115.
32. Randy Roberts, *Papa Jack: Jack Johnson and the Era of White Hopes*, London: Robson, 1986, 209.
33. *Chicago Defender*, 12 July 1919.
34. Newspaper clipping, 19 April 1919, Reel 12, *Alexander Gumby Scrapbook, Columbia University, New York City*. For an account by U.S. intelligence of the encounter with Sanborn, see Captain Hanson of Texas Rangers to Director of Military Intelligence, Washington, D.C., 15 October 1919, Reel 21, #824, *Surveillance Papers*. Here it is said that the Mexican generals backing Johnson “drew their pistols and made Sanborn shake hands with [Johnson] and apologize [to] him and serve him.”
35. William M. Hanson to Judge Kearful, 11 October 1919, Folder 177, *William F. Buckley Papers, University of Texas, Austin*.
36. Roberts, *Papa Jack*, 212.
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Notes to Chapter 4

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Notes to Chapter 4

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Notes to Chapter 5

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95. *The Crusader*, 4 (Number 1, March 1921): 3.
96. Leiker, *Racial Borders*, 120.
97. Memorandum from Consul General, New York, 20 August 1919, 17–18–128, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*: "desgracia de la raza negra en este pais. . . . Triste situacion de la gente de su raza. . . . Dar estas cartas con la discrecion posible, omitiendo el nombre del Sr. Stuart para no poner en peligro su vida."

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. *Albuquerque Journal*, 26 April 1997. See also Garna L. Christian, *Black Soldiers in Jim Crow Texas, 1899–1917*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995. Buffalo Soldiers were not the only ones who helped to dig the graves of potential allies. See Michael L. Tate, "'Pershing's Pets': Apache Scouts in the Mexican Punitive Expedition of 1916," *New Mexico Historical Review*, 66 (Number 1, January 1991): 49–72, 53. The "twenty-four member Company A of the Apache Scouts, [were] stationed at Fort Apache, Arizona, men whose ancestors had been in continuous service since 1866 when federal legislation had created the first scouting units as special adjunct forces of the regular army." Many of these men fought against the heroic Geronimo. They were accused of committing "horrible atrocities against Mexican citizens" in Chihuahua and were instrumental in "tracking down American deserters" south of the border. See also Michael L. Tate, "From Scout to Doughboy: The National Debate over Integrating American Indians into the Military, 1891–1918," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 17 (Number 4, October 1986): 417–437.
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3. "Buffalo Thunder," undated Leaflet from Buffalo Soldiers Society of New Mexico, PSC East Unit 376, 2050 Second Street SE, Kirtland, AFB, NM 87117-5563, Vertical Files, "Afro-Americans—Military—Buffalo Soldiers," *Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque*.
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5. See Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986.
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9. Oral History, S. L. A. Marshall, 18 May 1972, #11, *Archives of University of Texas, El Paso*.
10. Richard O'Connor, "'Black Jack' of the 10th," *American Heritage*, 18 (Number 2, February 1967): 14–15, 102–107, 102.
11. Richard Wormser, *The Yellowlegs: The Story of the United States Cavalry*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1966, 428.
12. James N. Leiker, *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002, 28–29, 82–83, 109.
13. See Brian Alexander Young, "The History of the Black in New Mexico from the Sixteenth Century through the Nineteenth Century Period," M.A. thesis, University of New Mexico, 1969, 104: Negro troops were involved in the violent Lincoln County war of the nineteenth century.
14. James W. Byrkit, *Forging the Copper Collar: Arizona's Labor-Management War, 1900–1921*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982, 228.
15. Leiker, *Racial Borders*, 70, 72.
16. *Boston Chronicle*, 19 March 1924.
17. Clifton C. Hawkins, "'Race First versus Class First': An Intellectual History of Afro-American Radicalism, 1911–1928," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Davis, 2000, 243.
18. William G. Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America's War for Democracy, 1914–1920*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001, 62.
19. James N. Leiker, "Racial Borders: Black Soldiers and Race Relations along the Rio Grande, 1861–1916," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1999, 246.

20. Edwin C. Bearss and A. M. Gibson, *Fort Smith*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969, 309.
21. Elvis E. Fleming, "'Buffalo Soldiers' and Buffalo Hunters: The Story of 'Nigger Hill,'" *Southwest Heritage*, 3 (Number 1, March 1973): 13–18, 24–26, 26.
22. See H. B. Wharfield, "The Yaqui Indian Fight," in John M. Carroll, ed., *The Black Military Experience in the American West*, New York: Liveright, 1971, 513–520. See also J. M. E. L. N. Glass, ed. and compiler, *The History of the Tenth Cavalry, 1866–1921*, Fort Collins: Old Army Press, 1972; Art T. Burton, *Black, Buckskin and Blue: African American Scouts and Soldiers on the Western Frontier*, Austin: Eakin Press, 1999, 206.
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24. *The Crisis*, 4 (Number 4, August 1912): 163.
25. S. F. Longborough to Captain W. M. Hanson, 2 September 1920, Box 5, Folder 3, *Albert Fall Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque*.
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31. *El Siglo* (Nogales, Sonora, Mexico), 22 July 1921, Box 107, Folder 35, *Albert Fall Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California*.
32. Unattributed statement, 22 November 1919, Box 107, Folder 35, *Albert Fall Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California*.
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41. *California Eagle*, 18 December 1941.
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45. "From the Memoirs of Maury Kemp, Esq.," no date, Box 6, *Lee C. Myers Papers*, Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces. See also Garna L. Christian, "The El Paso Racial Crisis of 1900," *Red River Valley Historical Journal*, 6 (Number 2, Spring 1981): 28–41.
46. *El Paso Times*, 17 February 1999.
47. Leiker, *Racial Borders*, 140.
48. Evan Anders, *Boss Rule in South Texas: The Progressive Era*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982, 132.
49. Leiker, *Racial Borders*, 140; *New York Age*, 22 November 1906; *Broad Ax* (Salt Lake City), 10 November 1906.
50. John Phillip Langellier, "Chaplain Allen Allensworth and the 24th Infantry, 1886–1906," *The Smoke Signal* (Number 40, Fall 1980): 190–208, 191, 194, 204.
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52. Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., *"Investigate Everything": Federal Efforts to Compel Black Loyalty during World War I*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, 241.
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62. Memorandum from Henry Lane Wilson, 16 November 1910, in Hanrahan, *Documents on the Mexican Revolution*, 88.
63. See also Henry Lane Wilson to U.S. Secretary of State, 19 November 1910, in Hanrahan, *Documents on the Mexican Revolution*, 92.
64. Henry Lane Wilson to U.S. Secretary of State, 30 April 1911, in Hanrahan, *Documents on the Mexican Revolution, Volume II, Part 2*, 325.
65. Leiker, *Racial Borders*, 150–151; *Houston Chronicle*, 16 March 1916.
66. See Gerald Horne, *Race War: White Supremacy and the Japanese Attack on the British Empire*, New York: New York University Press, 2003.
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69. See Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All! Foreign-Born Soldiers in World War I*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001.
70. Richard Melzer, “Stage Soldiers of the Southwest: New Mexico’s Four Minute Men of World War I,” *Military History of the Southwest*, 20 (Number 1, Spring 1990): 23–42, 23.
71. Joseph R. McElrath et al., eds., *Charles W. Chesnutt: Essays and Speeches*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, 452.
72. Joseph W. Bendersy, *The “Jewish Threat”: Anti-Semitic Politics of the U.S. Army*, New York: Basic, 2000, 39, 204. This phenomenon also complicated U.S. relations with Mexico. See W. H. Llewellyn, attorney, Las Cruces, New Mexico, to Attorney General of the United States, George Wickersham, 16 December 1911, in Hanrahan, *Documents on the Mexican Revolution, Volume III, Part II*, 39. In Mexico “in nearly every instance where there is a rich family, like the Maderos, they have a distinctive cast of Jewish features. This is particularly noticeable in Madero’s father. . . . All this class have inherited from the Jews the commercial instinct, and the faculty of acquiring property and money.”

73. Magnus Swenson to Attorney General, 4 September 1917, Series 1642, Box 15, Folder 8, *Wisconsin State Council of Defense Papers, State Historical Society, Madison*.
74. "War Department Policy with Reference to the Disposal of Draft Deserters," Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920, RG 3, Box 35, *Westmoreland Davis Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond*.
75. Governor Davis to Herman Gasch, 20 June 1918, RG 3, Box 35, *Westmoreland Davis Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond*.
76. J. Walter Hosier to Governor Davis, 8 February 1918, RG 3, Box 35, *Westmoreland Davis Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond*.
77. *Newark Sunday Ledger*, 14 December 1919.
78. G. A. Magee, Manager, Plant #1, Aluminum Goods Mfg. Co. to Congressman Florian Lambert, 24 February 1919, Series 1702, Box 2, *War History Commission Papers, State Historical Society, Wisconsin*.
79. Minutes of the Labor Committee of the Arizona Council of Defense, 17 May 1917, 139.1.2, File 43, *Papers of Arizona Council of Defense, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
80. Secretary of Nogales Chamber of Commerce to George H. Smalley, State Defense Council, 15 May 1917, 139.1.2, File 45, *Papers of Arizona Council of Defense, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
81. Unidentified writer to Governor Davis, 18 June 1918, RG 3, Box 38, *Westmoreland Davis Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond*.
82. Report to General Wilbur F. Sadler, 21 July 1916, Box 2, sdea6003, Miscellaneous, *Papers of Adjutant General's Office (Mexican Border War), Department of Defense, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton*.
83. Report to Commanding Officer, 26 June 1916, Box 4, *Papers of Adjutant General's Office (Mexican Border War), Department of Defense, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton*.
84. Court Martial of Private Joseph C. Davidson, 1 May 1916, Box 2, sdengo14, *Court Martial Records, New Jersey National Guard, Department of Defense, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton*.
85. D. H. Clardidge to Governor George Hunt, 23 April 1918, Box 2, *Governor's Files, 1914–1918, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
86. Grosvenor B. Clarkson, Director of the Council and of the Field Division to "the several State Councils of Defense," 24 December 1918, Film File, 139.1.3, File 68, *Papers of Arizona Council of Defense, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
87. Albert Fall to Major General Hugh L. Scott, Box 5, Folder 10, *Albert Fall Papers, Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces*.
88. Governor Hunt to Norman Carmichael, 7 October 1915, Box 8, File "Strike," *Private Papers of Governor George Hunt, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
89. Governor Hunt to Major H. H. Donkersley, 3 October 1915, Box 8, File "Strike," *Private Papers of Governor George Hunt, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.

Notes to Chapter 6

90. Norman Carmichael to Governor Hunt, 8 October 1915, Box 8, File "Strike," *Private Papers of Governor George Hunt, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
91. Proclamation of Governor Hunt, 27 October 1915, Box 8, File "Strike," *Private Papers of Governor George Hunt, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
92. Governor Hunt to Major H. G. Coykendall, 1 February 1916, Box 8, File "Strike," *Private Papers of Governor George Hunt, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
93. J. O. Moore et al. to Governor Hunt, 10 November 1916, Box 8, File "Strike," *Private Papers of Governor George Hunt, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
94. Norman Carmichael to Governor Hunt, 10 November 1916, Box 8, File "Strike," *Private Papers of Governor George Hunt, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
95. J. W. Strode, President, International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, Local 70, Miami, Arizona, to Governor Hunt, 4 April 1918, Box 8, File "Strike," *Private Papers of Governor George Hunt, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
96. Ben H. Dorcy, Major of Cavalry, Intelligence Officer, to "Commanding Officer, New Mexico Sub District," "Census of IWW Refugee Camp," 5 August 1917, Box 8, File "Strike," *Private Papers of Governor George Hunt, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
97. J. D. L. Hartman, Brigadier General, USA, Commanding, Headquarters District, Douglas, Arizona, to Governor Thomas Campbell, 17 February 1919, Box 2, *Governor's Files, 1914–1919, Arizona State Archives-Phoenix*.
98. "Annual Report of the Adjutant General," 30 November 1918, Box 2, *Governor's Files, 1914–1919, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
99. Carl Hayden to George Hunt, 13 March 1916, Box 8, File "Strike," *Private Papers of Governor George Hunt, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*. HR 13115 mandated that when the National Guard is ordered into service there shall be "immediately organized . . . one reserve battalion for each regiment of Infantry, Cavalry, or Artillery organized into the service of the United States." See also Frank N. Schubert, ed., *Voices of the Buffalo Soldier: Records, Reports, and Recollections of Military Life and Service in the West*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003, 214–216; Paul H. Carlson, *The Buffalo Soldier Tragedy of 1877*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003, 66. See also Arlen L. Fowler, *The Black Infantry in the West, 1869–1891*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1996; William A. Dobak and Thomas D. Phillips, *The Black Regulars, 1866–1898*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2001. The authors, who disparage use of the term "buffalo soldiers" as insulting, also dispute the idea that these men received inferior horses, food, and gear. They also dispute that these soldiers somehow became an elite unit.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. Resolution of 26 October 1917, Box 35, Record Group 3, *Papers of Governor Henry Carter Stuart, Library of Virginia, Richmond*.

Notes to Chapter 6

2. Emmett Scott to Secretary of War, 30 October 1917, Record Group 107, Box 1, *Emmett Scott Papers, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park*.
3. See *Phoenix Tribune*, 14 September 1918, 21 September 1918.
4. Memorandum from Arizona Council of Defense, 7 November 1917, File 139.1.1, File 8, *Papers of Arizona Council of Defense, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
5. Jacob Erickson to Chairman, Council of Defense, 9 November 1917, File 139.1.1, File 8, *Papers of Arizona Council of Defense, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
6. Mike Merrill and Harry C. Wheeler, Sheriff, to Dwight Heard, 5 November 1917, File 139.1.1, File 8, *Papers of Arizona Council of Defense*.
7. *Phoenix Tribune*, 28 December 1918.
8. *Phoenix Tribune*, 14 June 1919.
9. E. I. Reardon, Secretary, Campaign Manager, Sumter Council County of Defense, South Carolina, to George F. Porter, National Council for Defense, 10 October 1917, Box 26, II, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh*.
10. Chief of Section, National Council of Defense, to "the Several Southern State Councils of Defense," 23 February 1918, 139.1.4, File 105, *Papers of the Arizona Council of Defense, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
11. Memorandum "the Several Southern State Councils of Defense," 24 July 1918, File 139.1.4, File 105, *Papers of Arizona Council of Defense, Arizona State Archives*.
12. J. A. Orrell to J. G. McCormick, 13 August 1918, Box 15, II, North Carolina Council of Defense, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh*. See also D. H. Hill, Chairman, N.C. Council of Defense to Joseph B. Ramsey, Rocky Mount, 26 October 1918, II, Box 15, *World War I Collection* re: "whereabouts of Private George Harrison and Private Percy Lewis, two colored soldiers from Nashville, who are absent without leave from their company" and may face a "long term in the penitentiary."
13. File re: draft, circa 1917, Box 18, XIII, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh*.
14. D. H. Hill, Chairman, N.C. Council of Defense to A. A. Seawell, 26 October 1918, Box 15, II, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh* re: "whereabouts of Private George Gilmore, a colored soldier of your town, who is absent without leave"; D. H. Hill to R. S. McCain, Henderson, N.C., 26 October 1918, Box 15, II, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh* re: "whereabouts of Private Thomas Moore, a colored soldier . . . absent without leave"; D. H. Hill to F. H. Brookie, Smithfield, N.C., 26 October 1918, 26 October 1918, Box 15, II, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh* re: "whereabouts of Private Andrew Turner, a colored soldier of Clayton, who is absent without leave"; "C.O., 56th Co., 14th Bn., 153rd Depot Brigade," to State Council of Defense, 13 November 1918, Box 15, II, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh* re: "desertion and absent without leave . . . Dowdy Fletcher . . . colored . . . private," from Moncure, N.C. Box 16 lists numerous cases of Negro deserters.

15. George King to D.H. Hall, 28 August 1918, Box 15, II, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh*.
16. Sergeant B. McKay of Camden, New Jersey, to Senator Albert Fall, 19 January 1917, Box 2, Folder 17, *Albert Fall Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California*.
17. Henry Hilfers, Secretary of New Jersey Federation of Labor to Governor Walter Runyon, 15 December 1919, Correspondence, Folder 3, *Papers of Governor Walter Runyon, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton*.
18. R. P. Bellinger to Governor Richard Manning, 3 December 1917, Box 1, S534012, World War I Files, *Papers of Governor Richard Manning, South Carolina State Archives, Columbia*. See also W. H. Keith, Chairman, Local Board of Florence, South Carolina, to Governor Richard Manning, 29 October 1917, Box 1, S534012, World War I Files, *Papers of Governor Richard Manning, South Carolina State Archives, Columbia* re: "erroneous registration of a Negro, Henry Bacot. We have seen and talked to this Negro and he appears to be forty or forty-five years old. We recommend his discharge."
19. W. L. Daniel to Richard Manning, 25 October 1917, Box 1, S534012, World War I Files, *Papers of Governor Richard Manning*. See also George Calmer, Special Agent, U.S. Department of Justice, to Governor Manning, 4 October 1918, Box 1, S534012, World War I Files, *Papers of Governor Richard Manning*: "a very large percentage of registrants, backed by their parents, and other relatives, and in some instances the employers of Negroes on the farm, have sought by pressing their claims for deferred classification to keep out of the war."
20. Letter from Local Draft Board of Greenwood, 1 February 1918, Box 1, S534012, World War I Files, *Papers of Governor Richard Manning, South Carolina State Archives, Columbia*.
21. Harry Valentine, Montello, Wisconsin, to State Council of Defense, 21 January 1918, Series 1642, Box 15, Folder 9, *Papers of Wisconsin State Council of Defense, State Historical Society, Madison*.
22. Nathaniel S. Hargrave to D. H. Hall, 25 September 1918, Box 15, II, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh*.
23. Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., *"Investigate Everything": Federal Efforts to Compel Black Loyalty during World War I*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2002, 149, 311.
24. D. H. Hall, North Carolina Council of Defense, to County Chairman, 20 December 1917, Box 26, II, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh*.
25. Junius D. Grimes, Attorney, Washington, N.C., to D. H. Hall, 12 December 1917, Box 26, II, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh*.
26. Emil F. Rotering, Trempealeau County Council of Defense, to State Council of Defense, February 1918, Series 1642, Box 15, Folder 9, *Papers of Wisconsin State Council of Defense, State Historical Society, Madison*.

Notes to Chapter 6

27. Benjamin Tillman to Governor Richard Manning, 23 January 1915, Box 65, S543010, National Guard Files, *Papers of Governor Richard Manning, South Carolina State Archives, Columbia*.
28. Senator Tillman to Governor Manning, 6 May 1916, Box 65, S543010, National Guard Files, *Papers of Governor Richard Manning, South Carolina State Archives, Columbia*.
29. John Hertz Brown to Governor Manning, 5 June 1916, Box 65, S543010, S543010, National Guard Files, *Papers of Governor Richard Manning, South Carolina State Archives, Columbia*.
30. Nick Chiles to Governor Davis, 13 April 1918, RG 3, Box 35, *Papers of Governor Westmoreland Davis, Library of Virginia, Richmond*.
31. Governor Davis to Nick Chiles, no date, RG 3, Box 35, *Papers of Governor Westmoreland Davis, Library of Virginia, Richmond*.
32. J. P. Matthews to Governor Stuart, 7 June 1917, RG 3, Box 35, *Papers of Governor Henry Carter Stuart, Library of Virginia, Richmond*.
33. Joseph R. McElrath et al., eds., *Charles Chesnut: Essays and Speeches*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, 457.
34. Benjamin Heber Johnson, "Sedition and Citizenship in South Texas, 1900–1930," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2001, 213.
35. W. J. Megginson, *Black Soldiers in World War I: Anderson, Pickens and Oconee Counties, South Carolina*, Seneca: Oconee County Historical Society, 1994, 4.
36. Guy Hammond to Governor Manning, 21 June 1916, Box 67, *Papers of Governor Richard Manning*.
37. A. L. Prattier to Governor William C. McDonald, 24 April 1914, Box 30, File 408, *Papers of Governor William C. McDonald, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe*.
38. Harry Henning, Adjutant General, to Governor Octaviano A. Larrazolo, 10 April 1916, Serial No. 10880, *Adjutant General Papers, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe*.
39. Adjutant General to General A. L. Mills, Washington, D.C., 25 April 1914, Serial No. 10877, *Adjutant General Papers, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe*.
40. Adjutant General to General Funston, Fort Sam Houston, 24 September 1915, Serial Number 10877, *Adjutant General Papers, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe*.
41. Senator Albert Fall to Newton Baker, 26 June 1916, Box 8136, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*
42. James E. Merchant to "General Baca," 29 August 1919, Box 10, Folder 160, *Papers of Governor Octaviano A. Larrazolo, New Mexico State Records Center and Archive, Santa Fe*.

Notes to Chapter 6

43. Charles Cerny to General Baca, 19 August 1919, Box 10, Folder 160, *Papers of Governor Octaviano A. Larrazolo, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe*.

44. Grover Caynor to General Baca, 19 August 1919, Box 10, Folder 160, *Papers of Governor Octaviano A. Larrazolo, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe*.

45. Letter from Joe A. Franca, 29 August 1919, Box 10, Folder 160, *Papers of Governor Octaviano A. Larrazolo, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe*.

46. Mike Holguin and Jose Garcia to the Governor, 8 August 1919, Box 10, Folder 160, *Papers of Governor Octaviano A. Larrazolo, New Mexico State Records and Archives Center, Santa Fe*.

47. T. B. Leftwich to the Governor, 3 August 1919, Box 10, Folder 160, *Papers of Governor Octaviano A. Larrazolo, New Mexico State Records and Archives Center, Santa Fe*.

48. James J. Votam to the Governor and Secretary of War Newton Baker, 26 November 1919, Box 10, Folder 160, *Papers of Governor Octaviano A. Larrazolo, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe*.

49. Unsigned letter to Governor McDonald, 23 August 1916, Box 25, *Papers of Governor William C. McDonald, New Mexico State Records and Archives Center, Santa Fe*.

50. Letter to the Governor of New Mexico, 11 August 1916, Serial Number 10878, *Adjutant General Papers, New Mexico State Records and Archives Center, Santa Fe*.

51. General McCain to U.S. War Department, 15 March 1916, Box 8127, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

52. General McCain to Fort Sam Houston, 10 March 1916, Box 8127, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

53. Senator Marcus A. Smith to Secretary of War, 15 March 1916, Box 8128, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

54. Nogales Mayor to Adjutant General, 21 June 1916, Box 8135, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

55. Marcus A. Smith to the U.S. President, 16 May 1916, Box 8134, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

56. General Funston to U.S. War Department, 12 March 1916, Box 8127, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

57. Senator Morris Sheppard to Newton Baker, 19 April 1916, Box 8132, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

58. Lula Barker Martin to Secretary of War, 25 March 1916, Box 8131, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

59. Roger Sherman Baldwin to J. P. Tumulty, White House, 22 April 1916, Box 8132, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

60. Egmont W. Pohle to Secretary of War, 21 May 1916, Box 8133, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

61. James N. Leiker, "Racial Borders: Black Soldiers and Race Relations along the Rio Grande, 1861–1916," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1999, 224.

62. Report from General Pershing, 3 June 1916, Box 8128, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

63. Letter from Department of Interior, U.S. Indian Service, San Juan Indian Agency, Shiprock, New Mexico, Col. USIS and Stephen Olop, Lt. Col. USIS, to Adjutant General, 26 June 1916, Serial Number 10878, *Adjutant General Papers, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe.*

64. General Funston to U.S. War Department, 20 March 1916, Box 8128, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

65. H. L. Scott, Acting Secretary of War to Secretary of Interior, 11 April 1916, Box 8131, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

66. Newton Baker to Secretary of Interior, 26 May 1916, Box 8132, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

67. G. Volney Howard to General Harry T. Herring, Santa Fe, 11 May 1916, Serial Number 10878, *Adjutant General Papers, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe.*

68. *New York Tribune*, 20 May 1916.

69. *New York Sun*, 10 August 1916.

70. S. C. Mead, Secretary of Merchants' Association of New York to Secretary of War, 30 September 1916, Box 8137, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

71. Robert Bruce Johnson, "The Punitive Expedition: A Military, Diplomatic and Political History of Pershing's Chase after Pancho Villa, 1916–1917," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1964, 687–688.

72. General Funston to U.S. War Department, 30 May 1916, Box 8127, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

Notes to Chapter 6

73. General Funston to Adjutant General, 14 April 1916, Box 8132, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

74. Daniel Herbert La Botz, "'Slackers': American War Resisters and Communists in Mexico, 1917–1927," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1998, 22, 27, 36.

75. Memorandum, 17 August 1918, 16–24–153, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico.*

76. Kornweibel, "Investigate Everything," 4, 77, 78, 80, 90. But note that a "much higher proportion of blacks than whites failed to report for induction in the South, where nearly 80 percent of draft eligible men resided." In Florida 3 percent of whites failed to appear for induction, 21.32 percent of blacks. The black population of Arkansas was about 27 percent but only 4.79 percent of blacks registered for the draft in 1917. More cases of alleged black slackers and deserters were investigated in Texas—a frontline state during the Revolution—than any other state; Texas also handed out the most severe punishments for these offenses.

77. *The Crisis*, 14 (Number 6, October 1917): 303.

78. From Adjutant General to All Company Commanders, 21 August 1914, Serial Number 10877, *Adjutant General Papers, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe.*

79. *Washington Evening Star*, 3 February 1915; From Chief, Division of Military Affairs, to Adjutant General, 4 February 1915, Serial Number 10877, *Adjutant General Papers, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe.*

80. Adjutant General to All Company Commanders, 29 April 1915, Serial Number 10877, *Adjutant General Papers.*

81. Report of Adjutant General to the Governor, 1914, MS 136, Box 1, *F.L. Carroll Papers, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson.*

82. "Adjutant General's Report of the Territory of Arizona," 1910, MS 136, Box 1, *F.L. Carroll Papers, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson.*

83. Clipping, 28 April 1914, History File, #21, "Mexican Revolution, 1910–1917," *New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe.*

84. Ernest Forbes to Senator Albert Fall, 13 July 1913, Box 80, Folder 28, *Albert Fall Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California*

85. Secretary of NAACP to *New York Times*, 18 November 1922, Box C368, Group I, *NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*

86. Undated clippings, circa era of Mexican Revolution, Box G128, *NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*

87. Oral History, Charles Porras, 18 November 1975, #212, *Archives of University of Texas, El Paso.*

88. W. S. Schengler to "Adjutant General of the Army," 5 March 1911, Box 1, *Henry Lane Wilson Papers, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.*

89. "Official List of Americans Murdered in Mexico during Revolution from Files in the United States Department of State, as Transmitted September 9, 1919,"

Box 5, Folder 10, *Albert Fall Papers, Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces*.

90. Memorandum from General Bell, 18 June 1916, Box 8128, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

91. Memorandum, 19 May 1913, Galeria 5, Caja 65, Exp. 3, *Archivo General de Nacion, Mexico City*: “acusaba de robo de armas 7 caballos . . . acusados como agitadores peligrosa.”

92. Memorandum, 25 September 1913, Galeria 5, Caja 67, Exp. 23, *Archivo General de Nacion, Mexico City*: “El sistema de canales [en] el Valle Imperial en California . . . suficiente numero de tropas federales . . . peligro de perdidas perjuicios . . . destruccion.”

93. Memorandum, 17 February 1915, Galeria 5, Caja 22, Exp. 34, *Archivo General de Nacion, Mexico City*: “Existe un grupo mas poderoso . . . de Villistas.”

94. P. C. Harris, Adjutant General, War Department, Washington, D.C., to Senator Fall, 18 October 1919, Box 5, Folder 10, *Albert Fall Papers, Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces*.

95. Undated *Los Angeles Times* article in Galeria 5, Caja 99, Exp. 28, *Archivo General de Nacion, Mexico City*.

96. Memorandum, 14 August 1913, Galeria 5, Caja 67, Exp. 18, *Archivo General de Nacion, Mexico City*. See also Memorandum, 13 August 1913, Galeria 5, Caja 67, Exp. 17, *Archivo General de Nacion, Mexico City* re: protection of the interests of B. A. Packard and the Sierra Mining Company in Sonora, attacked by rebels; Memorandum, 24 September 1913, Galeria 5, Caja 67, Exp. 22, *Archivo General de Nacion, Mexico City* re: protection of the interests of J. R. Monroe and his ranch in Tamaulipas; Memorandum, 1 October 1913, Galeria 5, Caja 67, Exp. 25, *Archivo General de Nacion, Mexico City*. Here the United States demanded protection for a ranch in San Pablo besieged by a party of rebels from the state of Campeche; Memorandum, 1 October 1913, Galeria 5, Caja 67, Exp. 26, *Archivo General de Nacion* re: protection for U.S. mining interests. Memorandum, 19 September 1913, Galeria 5, Caja 67, Exp. 29, *Archivo General de Nacion* re: the death of U.S. citizen William O. Robertson near Mazatlan; Memorandum, 5 July 1913, Galeria 5, Caja 67, Exp. 31, *Archivo General de Nacion, Mexico City* re: protection of M. I. Vough of the United States now residing in Tamaulipas; Memorandum, 16 July 1913, Galeria 5, Caja 67, Exp. 32, *Archivo General de Nacion, Mexico City* re: protection of U.S. mining interests in Chihuahua.

97. “The Effect of the Revolution in Mexico on American-Mexican-Mining Interests,” September 1916, Box 6, Folder 1, *Albert Fall Papers, Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces*.

98. Michael J. Gonzales, *The Mexican Revolution, 1910–1940*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002, 9.

99. *Yuma Daily Examiner*, 25 August 1913.

Notes to Chapter 7

100. Mayor L. W. Mix to Governor George Hunt, 8 September 1915, Box 1, *Governors' Files, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.

101. Commanding General, El Paso to Commanding General Fort Sam Houston, 13 September 1919; List from "Nogales District," re: casualties as result of September 1918 "skirmish," no date, Box 5, Folder 10, *Albert Fall Papers, Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces*.

102. *New York World*, 29 March 1916, Reel 1, Scrapbooks, *John J. Pershing Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*

103. *The Crisis*, 11 (Number 6, April 1916): 310.

104. Reverend Edwards Burger to Governor Johnson, 16 March 1914, Part 2, Box 42, *Hiram Johnson Papers, University of California, Berkeley*.

105. M. D. Witter to Governor Johnson, 20 April 1914, Part 2, Box 42, *Hiram Johnson Papers, University of California, Berkeley*.

106. Andrew C. Baskin to Governor Johnson, 2 May 1914, Part 2, Box 9, *Hiram Johnson Papers, University of California, Berkeley*.

107. O. E. M. Howard to Governor Johnson, 22 April 1914, Box 42, Part 2, *Hiram Johnson Papers, University of California, Berkeley*. See also Edward Berger and G. F. Young to Governor Johnson, 23 April 1914, Box 42, Part 2, *Hiram Johnson Papers, University of California, Berkeley*: "impossible to secure rifles in the vicinity . . . none in colony . . . citizens desire loan from you of fifty rifles and ammunition for defense."

108. Memorandum to Commanding General, Fort Sam Houston, 18 March 1916, Box 8127, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

109. U.S. Senator John Works to Secretary of War Newton Baker, 27 June 1916, Box 8136, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

110. Telegram from California Adjutant General, 16 March 1916, Box 9, Part 2, *Hiram Johnson Papers, University of California, Berkeley*.

111. J. S. Mitchell to Governor Johnson, 26 June 1916, Box 19, Part 2, *Hiram Johnson Papers, University of California, Berkeley*.

112. Milbank Johnson to Governor Johnson, 24 April 1914, Box 42, Part 2, *Hiram Johnson Papers, University of California, Berkeley*.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. Oral History, Ernest D. Nielsen, 30 August 1971, OH 1017, *California State University, Fullerton*.

2. Friedrich Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, 121.

3. *Stars and Stripes*, 3 May 1918, Box 5, *Upton Sinclair Papers, California State University, Long Beach*.

4. Robert Rosenstone, *Romantic Revolutionary: A Biography of John Reed*, New York: Knopf, 1975.
5. Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, New York: Harper Collins, 1995, 171. See also Joseph W. Bendersy, *The "Jewish Threat": Anti-Semitic Politics of the U.S. Army*, New York: Basic, 2000, 353. Patton had a "mindset in which Mexicans, Indians and African-Americans constituted inferior races."
6. Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., *"Investigate Everything": Federal Efforts to Compel Black Loyalty during World War I*, Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2002, 256–257, 261, 265.
7. Private George Canada to Newton Baker, 25 November 1918, Reel 4, #475, *Correspondence of the Military Intelligence Division Relating to "Negro Subversion," 1917–1941*, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.
8. Charles H. Harris and Louis R. Sadler, *The Border and the Revolution: Clandestine Activities of the Mexican Revolution: 1910–1920*, Silver City: High-Lonesome Books, 1990, 116.
9. Oral History, Clarence I. Harris, 10 January 1989, *San Diego Historical Society, San Diego, California*.
10. Oral History, James Russell Johnson, 30 August 1980, *San Diego Historical Society, San Diego, California*.
11. Oral History, Carl M. Eichenlaub, 4 January 1974, *San Diego Historical Society, San Diego, California*.
12. Richard Griswold del Castillo, "The Discredited Revolution: The Magonista Capture of Tijuana in 1911," unpublished paper, 1980, *San Diego Historical Society, San Diego*.
13. Charles J. Hanlen, "Ricardo Flores Magon: Is the United States Any Place to Foment a Mexican Revolution?" unpublished paper, 1972, *San Diego Historical Society, San Diego*.
14. U.S. Congress, 66th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate, Document No. 285, *Investigation of Mexican Affairs: Preliminary Report and Hearings of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Pursuant to S. Res. 106*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920, 2515.
15. Memorandum, 18 February 1911, L-E-637, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*. This file includes articles that shed light on this matter from the 18 February 1911 *Arizona Republic* and the 21 February 1911 *San Diego Union*.
16. W. B. Matthews to Hon. Pedro Garma 7 Urigune, 28 July 1913, L-E-773, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*.
17. Henry O. Flipper to Senator Albert Fall, 25 February 1914, Box 80, Folder 20, *Albert Fall Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California*.
18. Theodore D. Harris, ed., *Black Frontiersman: The Memoirs of Henry O. Flipper*, Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1997, 101, 103.
19. *The Crisis*, 6 (Number 5, September 1913): 219.

Notes to Chapter 7

20. *New York Sun*, 4 July 1916.
21. *El Paso Herald*, 24 June 1916. See also *El Paso Herald*, 17 October 1917. Two Negro privates of Company M, 24th Infantry arrested when they attempt to board a train for the border at Casas Grandes; they are brought to Juarez and turned over to the U.S. authorities.
22. *New York Sun*, 30 July 1916.
23. Lowell Blaisdell, *The Desert Revolution: Baja California, 1911*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962.
24. Louis Hostetter to U.S. Secretary of State, 17 December 1916, Box 8129, Record Group 94, 2377632, Stack Area: 8w3, Row 24, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*
25. Louis Hostetter to U.S. Secretary of State, 21 April 1916, Box 8132, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*
26. Louis Hostetter to U.S. Secretary of State, 16 February 1917, Box 8129, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*
27. Unattributed statement, 29 November 1919, Box 107, Folder 35, *Albert Fall Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California*. See also Marilyn Dell Brady, "The Paynes of Texas: Black Seminole Cowboys of the Big Bend," in Sara R. Massey, ed., *Black Cowboys of Texas*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000, 255–271, 262. John Payne, often called Juan, was defined as a Negro in the United States and "became involved in the Mexican Revolution. His son, Blas, claimed that John fought four years while soldiers took the crops his wife, Refugia, and the children needed to survive. Blas forcefully asserted that his father had fought 'for the Revolution' rather than for any particular side. John's grandson, Morgan Gordon, Jr., tells a different version. He says that John Payne was an officer for the Federales, fighting to defend the Diaz government. Then he deserted and followed his brother into the United States where they both held citizenship because of their 'birth at Fort Clark.'"
28. Memorandum, 16 December 1913, L-E-788, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City*.
29. Memorandum from Mexican Consul, Mobile, circa 1914, L-E-788, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City*.
30. Memorandum from Mexican Consul, San Antonio, 7 January 1914, L-E-788, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City*.
31. Memorandum from Mexican Consul, Belize, 21 January 1914, L-E-788, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City*. See also Memorandum from Mexican Consul in "Belice," 11 December 1913, L-E-794, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico*.
32. British Foreign Office to Mexico, 10 March 1914, L-E-788, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City*.

33. See *Yuma Daily Examiner*, 5 September 1913. Note reference to A.V. Reburn, Jr., "as picturesque a looking figure as ever stalked a novel or short story. He wore a battered khaki suit, the trousers ending at the knees . . . [and] half hose. A blonde imperial and a seasoned [pith] helmet completing the picture . . . [he] hurried over to the hotel cigar counter after he had registered. 'Give me some white men's cigarettes.' . . . A sigh of satisfaction escaped him as he lit one and took a deep puff."
34. Richard Griswold Castillo, "The Discredited Revolution: The Magonista Capture of Tijuana in 1911," unpublished paper, 1980, *San Diego Historical Society, San Diego, California*. See also James Robert Moriarty III and Elaine P. Lamb, "The Railroad and Revolutionaries," unpublished paper, no date, *San Diego Historical Society, San Diego, California*.
35. Memorandum from Mexican Consul in Douglas, Arizona, 3 September 1906, 5-16-54, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*.
36. Dennis McDougal, *Privileged Son: Otis Chandler and the Rise and Fall of the L.A. Times Dynasty*, Cambridge: Perseus, 2001, 78-83.
37. Joan B. Olk, "The Boers in the Southwest," unpublished paper, 1953, Vertical File, "Boers in the Southwest," *El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas*.
38. Brian M. du Toit, *Colonia Boer, an Afrikaner Settlement in Chubut, Argentina*, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995; Brian M. du Toit, *The Boers in East Africa: Ethnicity and Identity*, Westport: Bergen and Garvey, 1998; Brian M. du Toit, *Boer Settlers in the Southwest*, El Paso: Texas Western University Press, 1995.
39. Benjamin Viljoen to A.V. Lomeli, 20 September 1912, 5-19-24, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*.
40. Benjamin Viljoen to A.V. Lomeli, 3 November 1912, 5-19-24, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*.
41. A.V. Lomeli to Benjamin Viljoen, 28 October 1912, 5-19-24, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*.
42. Memorandum from Mexican Consul, San Francisco, 26 April 1916, L-E-800, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*.
43. Memorandum from Mexican Consul General, San Antonio, 19 March 1914, L-E-788, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*: "un amigo nuestro señor F. A. Easterling, que por algun tiempo tuve empleado en Del Rio, Texas como agente del servicio secreto."
44. Memorandum, 10 December 1906, L-E-1244, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*.
45. Clipping, *Bisbee Daily Review*, 6 September 1912, L-E-831, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City*. The Mexican authorities took note of this article which reported that "because of increasing trouble on the Mexican border, all of the United States troops remaining at Fort Huachuca have been ordered to move tomorrow." See also Memorandum from Mexican Consul in Naco, Arizona, 28 January 1913, L-E-854, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City*.

46. Memorandum, 8 May 1917, L-E-838, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City*: “un agente secreto.”

47. *New York Sun*, 7 April 1916.

48. Memorandum from Captain, General Staff, 11 May 1916, Box 8131, Record Group 94, File 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

49. *El Paso Herald Post*, 27 October 1960. See also *El Paso Times*, 22 March 1953. Cal A. Thorpe fought alongside the Mexican leader Madero; *Kaleidoscope*, December 1973 (El Paso), Tracy Richardson, born in Nebraska in 1982, fought in Nicaragua in 1909, Venezuela in 1911. Lee Christmas was born in Louisiana in 1863; “before his illustrious career ended in his death in 1924,” he “had served as general in the armies of five Central American countries.” Sam Dreben, “the Fighting Jew,” was born in Russia in 1878 and came to the United States at the age of twenty; he fought in the Philippines and in Mexico. The tendency of “qualified” Euro-Americans to fight abroad or for their own aggrandizement also underscores the value of Negro troopers.

50. Memorandum from Pedro L. de la Cerda, 2 March 1912, 16-11-13, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City*: “en virtud de amistad con un oficial del ejercito Americano, un buen amigo mio residente en Washington y quien ha obtenido de mi la formal promesa do no a revelar su nombre.”

51. W. A. Webb to Fairfax Harrison, 27 June 1916, Box 8136, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

52. *California Eagle*, 17 March 1917.

53. Mexican Consul in Laredo, Texas, to Hon. C. G. Brewster, U.S. Marshal, Laredo, 14 November 1911, L-E-849, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico*.

54. Memorandum, 3 March 1911, L-E-862, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City*: “trescientos individuos, la mayoria americanos.” See also *Yuma Daily Examiner*, 25 August 1913: “This is the first time in two years that fighting has occurred at or near Mexicali and then the rebels under Williams, an American adventurer, were victorious though their leader was killed.”

55. Memorandum from Mexican Consul, 8 September 1919, 17-18-143, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*: “radicales de este pais, haciendo una camppagna energica en favor de Mexico.” See also File L-E-866 in this archive.

56. *The Huachuca Scout*, 13 (Number 18, 10 August 1967): 1, *Arizona Historical Society, Tucson*.

57. Wayne Spangler, “History of Fort Huachuca,” in “Guide to Fort Huachuca 1959,” File “Military Posts—Arizona—Huachuca—History,” *Arizona Historical Society, Tucson*.

58. Clipping, 2 June 1912, File “Military Posts—Arizona—Huachuca—1900—1920s,” *Arizona Historical Society, Tucson*.

59. Michael Dennis Carman, *United States Customs and the Madero Revolution*, El Paso: Texas Western University Press, 1976, 24.
60. Horace Daniel Nash, "Town and Sword: Black Soldiers in Columbus, New Mexico in the Early Twentieth Century," Ph.D. dissertation, Mississippi State University, 1996, 145, 268, 308, 321, 362.
61. Robert Bruce Johnson, "The Punitive Expedition: A Military, Diplomatic, and Political History of Pershing's Chase after Pancho Villa, 1916–1917," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1964, 704, 767.
62. Kornweibel, "Investigate Everything," 134.
63. *New York Times*, 27 March 1916.
64. *New York Sun*, 10 April 1916.
65. Memorandum to Adjutant General, 1 March 1915, Volume 19, *Walter Prescott Webb Papers*, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas, Austin.
66. A. W. Pollard to Governor Lindsey, 1 August 1917, Box 9, Folder 180, *Papers of Governor Washington Lindsey*, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe.
67. Carl Johnson to George Nanupella, 17 July 1968, Box 1, File 1, *Mexican Border Veterans Papers*, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.
68. W. M. Hanson to Charles V. Safford, 15 November 1919, Box 5, Folder 8, *Albert Fall Papers*, Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces.
69. W. M. Hanson to Senator Fall, 3 December 1919, Box 5, Folder 8, *Albert Fall Papers*, Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces.
70. Charles Jones to Charles V. Safford, 26 March 1920, Box 5, Folder 8, *Albert Fall Papers*, Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces.
71. Calvin Warner Hines, "The Mexican Punitive Expedition of 1916," M.A. thesis, Trinity University, 1961, 17.
72. Wayne Spangler, "History of Fort Huachuca," in "Guide to Fort Huachuca 1959," File "Military Posts—Arizona—Huachuca—History," *Arizona Historical Society*, Tucson. See also Clarence O. Brunner, "History of Fort Huachuca," no date, *New Mexico State Records Center and Archives*.
73. John H. Nankivell, *History of the Twenty-Fifth Regiment, United States Infantry, 1869–1926*, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969, 145.
74. *The Crisis*, 8 (Number 3, July 1914): 114.
75. Letter to U.S. Secretary of State, 8 November 1913, Box 41, Folder 86, *Boaz W. Long Papers*, New Mexico State Records and Archives Center, Santa Fe.
76. "Descriptive Statement of Bandit Outrages and Hold-Ups Throughout the Tampico Oil Fields," no date, Box 41, Folder 90, *Boaz W. Long Papers*, New Mexico State Records and Archives Center, Santa Fe. As of 1917, Long was U.S. ambassador to El Salvador.
77. Elmer E. Studley to Governor McDonald, 22 April 1914, Box 30, File 404, *Papers of Governor William C. McDonald*, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe.

78. Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military*, New York: Free Press, 1986, 83.
79. Joseph A. Stout, Jr., *Border Conflict: Villistas, Carrancistas and the Punitive Expedition*, Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1999, 45.
80. *Albuquerque Journal*, 13 March 1987, File #26, "Pancho Villa Raid," *New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe*.
81. Richard O'Connor, "'Black Jack' of the 10th," *American Heritage*, 18 (Number 2, February 1967): 14–15, 102–107, 107.
82. Pamphlet, no date, Box 1, File 1, *Mexican Border Veterans Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison*.
83. Johnson, "The Punitive Expedition," 118.
84. Theodore G. Vincent, *The Legacy of Vicente Guerrero, Mexico's First Black Indian President*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001, 259. The author adds, "Although African genes [*sic*] can be postulated for the Zapata, Flores Magon and Villa families, neither the Flores Magons, from rural indigenous Oaxaca, nor Villa, from rural Durango, experienced the Africanized Black Indian third nation social heritage that Zapata drew on to become the revolution's most remembered caudillo."
85. *California Eagle*, 8 April 1916. This comment about the Chinese seems to contradict Villa's reported bias against them. See Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, 597.
86. *New York Times*, 13 June 1916; Eric Ledell Smith, *Bert Williams: A Biography of the Pioneer Black Comedian*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1992, 179.
87. Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, 526.
88. Carl Johnson to George Nanupella, 17 July 1968, Box 1, File 1, *Mexican Border Veterans Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison*.
89. Johnson, "The Punitive Expedition," 52.
90. No author given, "Buffalo Soldiers," *Black Heritage in Arizona*, 1 (Number 4, August 1976): 1–8, 6.
91. *El Paso Herald*, 12 July 1916.
92. Douglas V. Meed, "Suicide Charge at Carrizal," *True West*, 40 (Number 9, 1992): 20–25, 22, 23, 24. See also Jamor E. L. N. Glass, ed. and compiler, *The History of the Tenth Cavalry, 1866–1921*, Fort Collins: Old Army Press, 1972.
93. Roy R. Fredrickson to Gardner Cowles, 8 July 1955, Box 2, Folder 1, *Mexican Border Veterans Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison*.
94. *El Paso Herald*, 20 March 1916.
95. *El Paso Herald*, 21 March 1916.
96. *El Paso Herald*, 18 April 1916.
97. Richard Melzer, "On Villa's Trail in Mexico: The Experience of a Black Cavalryman and a White Infantry Officer, 1916–1917," *Military History of the Southwest*, 21 (Number 2, Fall 1991): 173–190, 174, 176, 178, 179.
98. *El Paso Herald*, 26 April 1916.

99. *El Paso Herald*, 22 March 1916.
100. *El Paso Herald*, 22 March 1916.
101. *El Paso Herald*, 22 March 1916.
102. *El Paso Herald*, 14 April 1916.
103. *El Paso Herald*, 25 March 1916.
104. Robert Lansing, U.S. Secretary of State, to Secretary of War, 3 January 1916, Box 8139, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*
105. *El Paso Herald*, 7 April 1916.
106. Affidavit of Wilbert Miller, 26 June 1916, Box 71, Record Group 395, NM-94, E-1204, HM 1199, *Records of U.S. Army Overseas Operations and Commands, 1898–1942, World War I Organization Records, Punitive Expeditions to Mexico, HDQRS, 1916–1917, Carrizal Encounter, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.* (Hereinafter referred to as *Carrizal Papers*.)
107. Affidavit of Lem H. Spilsbury, circa 1916, Box 71, Record Group 395, *Carrizal Papers*.
108. “Roster and Notation of Casualty,” circa 1916, Box 71, Record Group 395, *Carrizal Papers*.
109. *El Paso Herald*, 24 June 1916.
110. General Funston to the U.S. Attorney General, 16 July 1916, Box 8136, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.* Certainly the black corpses recovered were in not very good shape. See Box 8136, undated, “Description of Bodies Recovered at Carrizal.” “Unidentified Negro about 5 ft. 6 in. Very black, slender, right arm broken, shot in breast.” “No. 3, bald, very prominent teeth, long gold teeth, 2 gold upper 3rd and 4th, 2 gold upper right 3rd and 4th, breast very hairy, weight 175–180, fat, height about 6 ft., underwear good, 2 piece suit . . . shot twice, breast, head very badly shot, apparently white.” “No. 7 unidentified slender Negro. Hair, chinky, height 5 ft. 9 in., high forehead, mouth shot to pieces, color black.” “No. 8 very black Negro not buried. No teeth—all gone, head shot badly. 5 ft. 7 or 9 in.” “No. 9, Negro, black. Teeth badly shattered, head shot badly, 5 ft. 6 in. weight 130–140 drawers only, medium build, high forehead, short kinky hair.”
111. *El Paso Herald*, 30 June 1916. See also James N. Leiker, “Racial Borders: Black Soldiers and Race Relations along the Rio Grande, 1861–1916,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1991, 397. The Negro troopers “repudiated claims of Mexican atrocities; none remembered any wounded soldiers murdered after surrender.” Some also “complained that the battle had been unnecessary.”
112. *El Paso Herald*, 3 July 1916.
113. *El Paso Herald*, 10 July 1916.
114. *El Paso Herald*, 28 June 1916.
115. *El Paso Herald*, 12 July 1916.

Notes to Chapter 7

116. J. H. Brown to "Chief of Staff," 25 June 1916, Box 8133, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*
117. *New York Sun*, 25 February 1917.
118. *The Crisis*, 12 (Number 1, May 1916): 31.
119. *The Crisis*, 12 (Number 4, August 1916): 163.
120. *The Crisis*, 12 (Number 4, August 1916): 163, 174, 184.
121. *The Crisis*, 12 (Number 5, September 1916): 237.
122. *The Crisis*, 14 (Number 2, June 1917): 61.
123. James N. Leiker, *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande*, College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 2002, 167, 173.
124. Leiker, "Racial Borders," 399.
125. John W. Campbell to Governor Stuart, 30 October 1917; Secretary to Governor Stuart to John W. Campbell, 31 October 1917, Box 35, Record Group 3, *Papers of Governor Henry Carter Stuart, Library of Virginia, Richmond*.
126. *El Paso Herald*, 22 June 1916.
127. Leiker, *Racial Borders*, 167.
128. P. C. Harris, Adjutant General to Charles Young, 16 September 1916, Reel 5, #622, *W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina*.
129. W. E. B. Du Bois to Charles Young, 21 January 1916, Reel 5, #622, *W. E. B. Du Bois Papers*.
130. W. E. B. Du Bois to Walter Lippman, 29 June 1917, Reel 5, #622, *W. E. B. Du Bois Papers*.
131. Charles Young to W. E. B. Du Bois, 20 June 1917, Reel 5, #622, *W. E. B. Du Bois Papers*.
132. Charles Young to W. E. B. Du Bois, 11 August 1919, Reel 5, #622, *W. E. B. Du Bois Papers*. See George Schuyler, *Black and Conservative: The Autobiography of George Schuyler*, New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1966, 86–87. On a trip from Hawaii to Des Moines, the author met Young "on a street car in Oakland. . . . He had been given instructions to pursue and capture the Mexican bandit Pancho Villa. . . . Young's regiment chased Villa into a long valley and he urged the commander of another regiment to close the other end of the valley so the Mexican forces would be bottled up. This the other colonel failed to do," so Villa escaped. "What he did not know and what he had not been told was that instructions had been quietly given to the other commanders" that Villa "was to be pursued but not captured; that the real American intention was to follow Villa as deeply into Mexico as possible."
133. Oral History, Joe Barrales, 14 June 1984, File #26, "Pancho Villa Raid," *New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe*.
134. Sydney Mudd to Brigadier General Henry McCain, 28 July 1916, Box 8137, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

1. "Memorandum on the Message of Zimmerman to the German Minister to Mexico," 4 March 1917, Box 7, Folder 2, *Robert Lansing Papers, Princeton University*.
2. *The Crisis*, 5 (Number 5, March 1913): 236–237.
3. "The Zimmerman Note," *Current History*, 6 (Number 6, April 1917): 3.
4. "Memorandum on the Message of Zimmerman."
5. John Redwood, *Stars and Strife: The Coming Conflicts between the USA and the European Union*, New York: Palgrave, 2001, 73.
6. John S. D. Eisenhower, *Intervention! The United States and the Mexican Revolution, 1913–1917*, New York: Norton, 1993, 212.
7. Senator Albert Fall filed away a contemporaneous report that suggested that the Plan of San Diego was taken quite seriously, even by those who may have questioned its validity—which is why it remains worth discussing. See George Pattullo, "Once a Mexican, Always," *Saturday Evening Post*, 12 August 1916, Box 91, Folder 26, *Albert Fall Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California*. "Part of Uncle Sam's frontier domain[s] are as dark in complexion as any corresponding area under Carranza's rule. Take counties like Zapata and Starr. . . . Take Rio Grande Valley in the Lower Valley . . . wherever the whites have to compete on their own soil with a strong alien element trouble inevitably follows. That has been shown in dealing with the Negroes and the same factors play a large part in the local sentiment toward Mexicans." This "fantastic Plan of San Diego . . . sounds like the vaporings of a demented fanatic; but it was of very real concern to the Border. . . . A banker who is a large landowner discovered one day that every single one of his tenants—who had been with him eight years without disagreement or complaints and of whom he often boasted—every single one was aligned with the conspirators. . . . Bizarre as the plan appears, it has left a trail of blood and burnings, thefts and assassinations, in the Border counties . . . scores of attacks on ranches, of wrecked bridges and trains, that can be traced directly to it." Moreover, the major powers knew that restive minorities and colonies attracted the attention of other powers who correctly saw them as potentially subversive. Thus, at this very time Japan was accused of fomenting an uprising against British rule in India. See *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, no date, circa 1915, Box 5, Record Group 165, File 110–209, *Papers of the War Department and General Staffs, National Archives and Records Administration, Laguna Niguel, California*.
8. Charles H. Harris III and Louis R. Sadler, "The Plan of San Diego and the Mexican–United States War Crisis of 1916: A Reexamination," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 58 (Number 3, 1978): 381–408, 381, 406. See also Friedrich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States and the Mexican Revolution*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981, 339. This eminent historian questions the extent of Germany's involvement in some of these anti-Washington plots and the extent to which such efforts were Mexican or Chicano-inspired. However, see

Douglas Richmond, "La Guerra de Texas se Renova: Mexican Insurrection and Carrancista Ambitions, 1900–1920," *Aztlan: International Journal of Chicano Studies Research*, 11 (Number 1, Spring 1980): 1–32, 16, 19. "Charles Cumberland, probably one of the best historians of the border during the Mexican Revolution claimed that Texas Mexicans took part to a significant event. . . . Undoubtedly the major reason for the Plan de San Diego movement was the ruthless response of local authorities" to these people. See also Oscar Martinez, ed., *Fragments of the Mexican Revolution: Personal Accounts from the Border*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983.

9. However, note that the "Mexican Liberal Party" of the Magon brothers asserted vigorously that "there is no such thing as [the] Plan of San Diego or any scheme of that kind." That this was introduced in a trial may cast doubt on its validity. See Exhibit, "Manifesto of the Mexican Liberal Party," *United States vs. Enrique Flores Magon and Ricardo Flores Magon*, 17 September 1916, Box 62, Criminal Cases 1063–1071, File 1071, Record Group 21, *Records of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of California, Southern Division, 1907–1929, National Archives and Records Administration, Laguna Niguel, California*.

10. Robert W. Larson, "The White Caps of New Mexico: A Study of Ethnic Militancy in the Southwest," *Pacific Historical Review*, 44 (Number 2, May 1975): 171–185, 171.

11. James N. Leiker, *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002, 160.

12. *El Paso Herald*, 1 May 1919.

13. *El Paso Herald*, 29 July 1915.

14. Clarence C. Clendenen, *The United States and Pancho Villa: A Study in Unconventional Diplomacy*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961, 182.

15. John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, 47. See also Clarence C. Clendenen, *Blood on the Border: The United States Army and the Mexican Irregulars*, London: Macmillan, 1969.

16. Salome Hernandez, "Innocence or Guilt? Mexico's Arrest of the Yaquis, 1899–1909," *Journal of the West*, 14 (Number 4, October 1975): 15–26, 19.

17. Friedrich Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, 121.

18. H. J. McQuigg, U.S. Indian Service, Department of Interior, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 20 April 1916, Box 8132, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

19. James A. Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904–1923*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992, 11.

20. Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., "Investigate Everything": *Federal Efforts to Compel Black Loyalty during World War I*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, 66.

21. Juan Gomez Quinoñes, "Piedras Contra la Luna, Mexico en Aztlan y Aztlan en Mexico: Chicano-Mexican Relations and the Mexican Consulates, 1900-1920," in James W. Wilkie et al., eds., *Contemporary Mexico*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976, 494-523, 513, 511-519.
22. *New York Times*, 31 August 1915.
23. *Houston Chronicle*, 30 June 1912, and Memorandum from Consul in San Antonio, 10 July 1913, 16-8-01, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*.
24. Beth Tompkin Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001, 63.
25. Charles C. Cumberland, "Border Raids in the Lower Rio Grande Valley," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 57 (June 1954): 285-305, 285.
26. Frank N. Samponaro and Paul J. Vanderwood, *War Scare on the Rio Grande: Robert Runyon's Photographs of the Border Conflict*, Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1992, 78.
27. David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987, 117. See also *Biennial Report of the Adjutant General of Texas, from January 1, 1917 to December 31, 1918*, Texas State Archives, Austin.
28. Don M. Coerver and Linda B. Hall, *Texas and the Mexican Revolution: A Study in State and National Border Policy, 1910-1920*, San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1984, 106.
29. Bradford Luckingham, *Minorities in Phoenix: A Profile of Mexican American, Chinese American and African American Communities, 1860-1992*, Tucson: University of Arizona, 1994, 28. See also Patrick Cox, "'An Enemy Closer to Us Than Any European Power': The Impact of Mexico on Texan Public Opinion before World War I," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 105 (Number 1, July 2001): 41-80, 62, 63. The Plan "created a strong response" and a "crisis atmosphere." A southwestern governor told President Wilson, "I do not overdraw the picture when I say that a reign of terror exists on the Mexican border." See also *Dallas Morning News*, 7 April 1917, 9 April 1917.
30. Clipping, uncertain provenance, 15 January-15 February 1977, Vertical File, "Plan of San Diego," Texas State Archives, Austin. See also Donald R. Hedgpeth, "The Plan of San Diego: A Border Conflict," M.A. thesis, Southwest Texas State College, 1969, 32. *Houston Chronicle*, 10 April 1959, 13 April 1959.
31. *U.S. vs. Basilio Ramos, Jr., L. Ferrigno, A. S. Garza, Manuel Flores, A. Gonzalez, A. A. Saenz, E. Cisneros, Porfirio Santon and A. C. Almaraz*. U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas, Brownsville, Division, "A True Bill," 13 May 1915, National Archives and Records Administration, Fort Worth, Texas.
32. Santos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands*, 79.
33. Statement of Basilio Ramos, 28 January 1915, Volume 19, *Walter Prescott Webb Papers*, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas, Austin.

Notes to Chapter 8

34. Benjamin Heber Johnson, "Sedition and Citizenship in South Texas, 1900–1930," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2001, 100, 187.
35. Captain J. J. Sanders to Adjutant General, 1 March 1915, Volume 19, *Walter Prescott Webb Papers*.
36. A. S. Garza to Basilio Ramos, 15 January 1915, Volume 19, *Walter Prescott Webb Papers*.
37. Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands*, 114–115, 143.
38. Johnson, "Sedition and Citizenship," 183, 185.
39. Arnold Shankman, "The Image of Mexico and the Mexican-American in the Black Press, 1890–1935," *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 3 (Number 2, Summer 1975): 43–56, 45. See also *Washington Bee*, 11 December 1915.
40. Kornweibel, "Investigate Everything," 66.
41. General Funston to U.S. Attorney General, 11 October 1916, Box 8137, Record Group 94, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*
42. Charles H. Harris III and Louis R. Sadler, *The Border and the Revolution: Clandestine Activities of the Mexican Revolution: 1910–1920*, Silver City, New Mexico: High-Lonesome Books, 1990, 94–95.
43. Bolton Smith, "Notes on the Negro Problem," June 1918, Box 1, Record Group 107, *Emmett Scott Papers, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland*.
44. Mark Ellis, *Race, War and Surveillance: African-Americans and the United States Government during World War I*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001, 144.
45. Emmett Scott to Secretary of War, 8 October 1917, Box 1, Record Group 107, *Emmett Scott Papers, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park*.
46. George Creel to Emmett Scott, 17 November 1918, Box 21, Record Group 63, *Records of the Committee on Public Information, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland*.
47. E. T. Atwell to Emmett Scott, 9 January 1918, Box 1, Record Group 107, *Emmett Scott Papers, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park*.
48. Speech by Emmett Scott, 20 January 1919, Box 1, Record Group 107, *Emmett Scott Papers, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland*.
49. John M. Withehead to Magnus Swenson, State Council of Defense, 5 July 1917, Box 28, File 17, Series 1642, *Wisconsin State Council of Defense Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison*.
50. Bishop C. S. Smith, Commission on After-War Problems of the Bishops of the A.M.E. Church, to Governor Davis, 5 March 1919, Box 36, Record Group 3, *Papers of Governor Westmoreland Davis, Library of Virginia, Richmond*.
51. "Synopsis of the Proceedings" of Bishops' meeting, 19 February 1919; Bishop C. S. Smith to Secretary of War, 29 January 1919. Box 36, Record Group 3, *Papers of Governor Westmoreland Davis, Library of Virginia, Richmond*.

52. Bishop C. S. Smith to General Henry Jervey, Assistant Chief of Staff, U.S. War Department, 25 February 1919, Box 36, Record Group 3, *Papers of Governor Westmoreland Davis, Library of Virginia, Richmond*.

53. Ellis, *Race, War and Surveillance*, 214.

54. Memorandum from Major Alonzo Gray, 14th Cavalry, to Lt. Col. R. A. Brown, 15 June 1916, Box 8135, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

55. General Funston to Adjutant General, 7 June 1916, Box 8135, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.* See also "Confidential" Memorandum to Secretary of State from Laredo, 7 May 1920, Reel 71, Record Group 59, MO274, 812.00/23883, *Records of the U.S. State Department, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland*: "My man just returned from . . . Tamaulipas where he talked with [de la Rosa] who with his family is living there on Matamoros Street, house having no number. . . . Ostensibly is gambling for a living and goes back and forth to Reynosa. . . . Probably under instructions from Carranza to again make raids into Texas especially should the Carranza faction lose out in Mexico in which event Carranza would prefer American intervention rather than see Spaniards in power." See also the "confidential" letter from "G. Carothers . . . copied to General Staff, War College and Operations," 19 November 1916, Box 8129, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.* "Yesterday in a conversation with Don Manuel Bonilla, he told me that a young man of his acquaintance had just arrived from Mexico City and that he had in possession proofs that Carranza had not only sanctioned the border raids around Brownsville, but aided de la Rosa in their accomplishment. I requested Bonilla to send the young man to me, which he did. I asked him what were the nature of the proofs, and he said they were copies of correspondence and telegrams between Carranza, de la Rosa and . . . also some miner [*sic*] lights in the enterprise."

56. John H. Nankivell, *History of the Twenty-Fifth Regiment, United States Infantry, 1869–1926*, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969, 145.

57. J. Sprunt to D. H. Hall, 2 April 1918, Box 26, II, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Collection, Raleigh*.

58. *California Eagle*, 4 April 1917.

59. George King to D. H. Hall, 28 August 1918, Box 26, II, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh*.

60. Arthur Draper to Edward K. Graham, 9 September 1918, Box 26, II, *World War I Collection, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh*.

61. Information in this and immediately preceding paragraphs can be found in seriatim in Kornweibel, "Investigate Everything," 4, 38, 41, 42, 43, 45, 48, 72, 203, 244. See also 57 (in Mobile, "U.S. Attorney . . . reported persistent suspicions in four

counties with black majorities of an organized plot to create disloyalty among blacks and transport them to Mexico.”); 68 (man arrested in Birmingham after “it was rumored that he was recruiting blacks for military service in Mexico. . . . Two blacks were seized by Dallas police for allegedly recruiting men for a Mexican army to fight against the United States.”); 70 (“three black steelworkers came to blows with a white employee who urged them to fight only for Germany or Mexico.”); 184 (Mattie Macon, “a chambermaid at the Hotel Morse in San Diego in mid-1918 . . . expressing pride in the fact that she was half Cherokee Indian” was making “‘pro-German’ remarks”); 191 (German saboteurs in 1916 “destroyed the Black Tom railroad-marine terminal on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River. . . . After the country entered the war, most members of this group fled to Mexico.”). See also Ellis, *Race, War and Surveillance*, 7 (“announced that the government had seized a white man and a black man at Birmingham after they had toured Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, the Carolinas, and Mississippi ‘posing as bible salesmen and ministers of the gospel’ and urging black people to migrate to Mexico on specially provided trains”; 22 (the United States was “obliged to take allegations linking the migration to Mexico and Plan of San Diego more seriously” after “reporters were received . . . in Washington of German or Mexican agents in the South urging black men to join a German army in Mexico.”); 28 (in Texas a black man and a white man were said “to have opposed the draft and to have claimed that the Mexican army would soon be over to ‘clean up the whites.’”); 44 (an antiwhite supremacist, pro-“Japs [sic], Chinese, Hindus, and [Negroes]” leaflet was “traced to Dr. James E. Henderson, a black physician” and included “references to a ‘war of the races.’”); 48 (Negroes “in Harlem had feted a distinguished German who said previous to his departure for Mexico . . . that they owed nothing to the United States Government and contrasted the treatment of the Negroes by whites of this country with kindness he claimed they would receive if the Germans were in control.” There were further rumors to the effect that “some kind of Mexican plot is being hatched with the cooperation of blacks.”). See also William G. Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America’s War for Democracy, 1914–1920*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

62. Neil R. McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989, 305.

63. Jeff Woods, “Maroon Scare: Segregation, Anticommunism and the South, 1954–1968,” Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio University, 2000.

64. *New York Times*, 15 December 1918.

65. *San Francisco Call and Post*, 10 May 1918, Box 4, File 99, Record Group 165, *Papers of the War Department and General Staffs, National Archives and Records Administration, Laguna Niguel, California*.

66. Robert B. Spence, “K. A. Jankhe and the German Sabotage Campaign in the United States and Mexico, 1914–1918,” *The Historian*, 59 (Number 1, Fall 1996): 89–112, 92, 95.

67. See N. P. Macdonald, *Hitler over Latin America*, London: Jarrolds, 1940. See also G. A. Beall, Jr., USS Yorktown, Guayamas Sonora to Secretary of Navy, 18 October 1916, Box 8138, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.* “A German by the name of Schmidt has boasted, when under the influence of liquor, that he has been connected with fires and explosions in munition factories in the United States. He has stated that he intends to return to the United States soon for the purpose of disabling other works. Schmidt is an excellent electrician. . . . Schmidt’s statements are credited by Germans in Mazatlan.”

68. William G. Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America’s War for Democracy, 1914–1920*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001, 68.

69. Woodrow Wilson to Edward W. Pou, 1 May 1918, 219.1, *Edward W. Pou Papers, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh*.

70. Richard Melzer, “Stage Soldiers of the Southwest: New Mexico’s Four Minute Men of World War I,” *Military History of the Southwest*, 20 (Number 1, Spring 1990): 23–42, 26.

71. Memorandum, 10 October 1915, Box 7, Folder 2, *Robert Lansing Papers, Princeton University*.

72. Leiker, *Racial Borders*, 158.

73. Consider the Rio Tamasopo Sugar Company, an “Arizona Corporation” with “some twelve hundred American stockholders . . . capitalized for a million and half.” In 1911 Luis Roever, a German citizen, bought one-third of this company and then “the fun began,” as they were “raided by bandits almost daily.” Roever turned on his U.S. partners and “finally on the 4th of May 1917 shortly after war was declared by the U.S. on Germany, we were driven off our property by bandit raids, instigated as believed by the Germans. . . . Pablo E. Roever, brother of Luis, turned up. . . . [He was] an intelligence officer of the German propaganda in Mexico. . . . We lost all of our interest in Mexico” as a result. See Memorandum by H. B. Tanner, July 1924, Box 1, Folder 12, *Kenneth Boyd Tanner Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison*.

74. W. M. Hanson to Judge Kearful, 7 November 1919, Folder 177, 225.3[4], *William F. Buckley Papers, University of Texas, Austin*.

75. W. M. Hanson to Judge Kearful, 14 October 1919, Folder 177, *William F. Buckley Papers, University of Texas, Austin*. See *New York Times*, 7 February 1920: Two “former Carranza Colonels” said to be involved with the Plan. *New York Times*, 1 February 1920: Mexican officials involved in formulating the Plan. *New York Times*, 23 January 1920: Not only were “the highest Mexican officials cognizant” of the Plan, but they were still at this late date concocting similar plots.

76. M. S. Alperovich and B. T. Rudenko, *La Revolucion Mexicana de 1910–1917 y la Política de los Estados Unidos*, Ciudad de Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Popular, 1960, 269 (“Uno de sus inspiradores era el consul Aleman en Monterrey, Burachard.”); 271 (“habia Mexicanos al servicio de las organizaciones de espionaje Alemanas”); 274

("utilizar las contradicciones Germano-Norteamericanos para debilitar las posciones de los Estados Unidos en Mexico.").

77. Jim Tuck, *Pancho Villa and John Reed: Two Faces of Romantic Revolution*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1984, 95. See also General Funston to Adjutant General, 11 October 1916, Box 8137, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.* The Plan, it is said here, "originated in Monterey, Mexico and received active assistance of high officials of the Carrancista government. . . . During the summer and fall of [1915] agitators and organizers were sent from the headquarters of the conspirators at Monterrey to work among the men of Mexican blood living on the American side. . . . Some of the atrocities committed in Texas were undoubtedly the work of men living on the American side. . . . [They] were all a part of the conspiracy above referred to which was of strictly Mexican origin. . . . Among those who joined the raiders or who committed crimes under their orders and directions were many American citizens, all of them, however, of Mexican blood . . . approximately three hundred" of them.

78. Frank N. Samponaro and Paul J. Vanderwood, *War Scare on the Rio Grande: Robert Runyon's Photographs of the Border Conflict*, Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1992, 81.

79. Memorandum, 30 January 1914, L-E-788, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*.

80. U.S. Brigadier General to D. S. Barker, 29 June 1918, Volume 19, *Walter Prescott Webb Papers*.

81. *The Crisis*, 17 (Number 5, March 1919): 220.

82. Rodolfo Rocha, "The Influence of the Mexican Revolution on the Mexico-Texas Border, 1909-1916," Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Technical University, 1981, 290..

83. *The Crisis*, 14 (Number 6, October 1917): 284-285.

84. *The Crisis*, 14 (Number 1, May 1917): 37. See also Henry Landau, *The Enemy Within: The Inside Story of German Sabotage in America*, New York: G. P. Putnam, 1937. The espionage was not all from the German side. There was a "British Negro agent, William Gleaves. Though born a British subject in Montreal, Canada in 1870, he had spent his boyhood in Pennsylvania as a laborer and in 1893 had gone to live in Mexico City. During the war he was first employed by Mr. Cummings, the British Chargé d'Affaires in Mexico and later by Major Alfred Mason of the British Naval Intelligence for the purpose of obtaining information regarding German activities in Mexico. He too was successful in getting himself taken into the German Secret Service." See also Franz Rintelen von Kleist, *The Dark Invader: Wartime Reminiscences of a German Naval Intelligence Officer*, London: Frank Cass, 1968, 262. He was indicted in the United States for "contriving war plots with a foreign power (Mexico)."

85. Bolton Smith, "Notes on Negro Problem," June 1918, contains stamp "Major J. E. Spingarn," Box 1, Record Group 107, *Emmett Scott Papers, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park*.

86. John Frederick Nau, *The German People of New Orleans, 1850–1900*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958, 32.

87. Terry G. Jordan, *German Seed in Texas: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966, 106–108, 109.

88. James Oliver Horton and Harmut Keil, “African Americans and Germans in Mid-Nineteenth Century Buffalo,” in James Oliver Horton, ed., *Free People of Color: Inside the African American Community*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993, 170–183, 174, 175. See also Richard O’Connor, *The German-Americans: An Informal History*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1968, 29. General John Pershing who commanded Negro troopers in Mexico was of German descent; his family name was actually Pfoerschin.

89. Hartmut Lutz, “German Indianthusiasm: A Socially Constructed German National(ist) Myth,” in Colin G. Calloway et al., eds., *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002, 167–184, 175.

90. Phyllis Gillespie, “Deutschland and the West,” *Arizona Highways*, 70 (Number 10, October 1994): 12–17, 12, 14, 15.

91. Christian F. Feest, “Germany’s Indians in a European Perspective,” in Calloway, *Germans and Indians*, 25–43, 25, 29, 37.

92. Jeffrey L. Sammons, “Nineteenth-Century German Representations of Indians from Experience,” in Calloway, *Germans and Indians*, 185–193, 191.

93. Liam Riordan, “‘The Complexion of My Country’: The German as ‘Other’ in Colonial Pennsylvania,” in Calloway, *Germans and Indians*, 97–119, 99.

94. Bernd Peyer, “A Nineteenth-Century Ojibwa Conquers Germany,” in Calloway, *Germans and Indians*, 141–164, 154.

95. Colin G. Calloway, “Historical Encounters across Five Centuries,” in Calloway, *Germans and Indians*, 47–81, 58.

96. Hans Schmidt, *The United States and the Occupation of Haiti, 1915–1934*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995, 34.

97. James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1941, 124, 181. Note that coming back by ship from Haiti to New York City during the revolutionary era he kept hearing a phrase that reminded him of “how lean a chance was his [the Negro] with his white brothers of the proletariat. The expression which I heard at least a hundred times was, ‘Never let a nigger pick up a tool.’ ‘Never let a nigger pick up a tool.’ ‘Never let a nigger pick up a tool.’”

98. Oral History, Louise Gates, 14–15 December 1978, #726, *Archives of University of Texas, El Paso*.

99. *The Crisis*, 14 (Number 1, May 1917): 37. See Reverend H. G. Rogers to Magnus Swenson, 3 November 1917, Box 15, Folder 8, Series 1642, *Wisconsin State Council of Defense Papers*. Writing from Orfordsville, Wisconsin, he notes “Our Norwegian Lutheran Pastor Rev. O. J. Kvale has been decidedly pro-German.” See also State Council of Defense to Charles Barry, Marquette County Council of Defense, 12 November 1917, Box 15, Folder 8, *Wisconsin State Council of Defense Papers*.

Further concern expressed about "Lutheran Ministers." C. G. Wilcox, Mayor City of Depere, Wisconsin, Brown County to Wheeler P. Bloodgood, Wisconsin Defense League, 15 August 1917, Box 2, Series 1705, Wisconsin Defense League General Correspondence, *War History Commission Papers*. "The Lutheran Germans are particularly active among the number in opposing all kinds of war measures. A large part of this comes [from] their ministers and German newspapers." The undermining of pro-Negro sentiment as a result of the drive toward war cannot be downplayed.

100. See Gerald Horne, "Race from Power: U.S. Foreign Policy and the 'General Crisis of White Supremacy,'" *Diplomatic History*, 23 (Number 3, Summer 1999): 437–461.

101. Zeilia Nuttall, "The Earliest Historical Relations Between Mexico and Japan," *American Archaeology and Ethnology*, 4 (Number 1, 1906–1907): 1–47.

102. Undated reminiscence, Box 1 Folder 3, *Morris Hunter Jones Papers, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson*: Jones's father worked for the "Immigration Service" at that time and was struck by the Japanese presence there. The Mexican consulate in El Paso noted the hysteria in that city about the Japanese presence south of the border. See Memorandum, 14 April 1908, 15–20–71, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City*.

103. See *Arizona Graphic*, 1 (Number 7, 18 October 1899): 1.

104. David H. Grover, "Maneuvering for Magdalena Bay: International Intrigue at Baja California Anchorage," *Southern California Quarterly*, 83 (Number 3, Fall 2001): 261–284, 268.

105. See Jessie C. Lyon, "Diplomatic Relations between the United States, Mexico and Japan: 1913–1917," Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1975; James F. Abbott, *Japanese Expansion and American Policies*, New York: Macmillan, 1916; *New York World Telegram*, 9 April 1938, Box 133, *Carleton Beals Papers, Boston University*. "Reports of Japanese penetration along the west coast of Mexico have been frequent for some years."

106. Theodore Roosevelt to "Dear Speck," 16 July 1907, in Elting Morrison, ed., *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Volume 5*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952, 717.

107. Peter Calvert, *The Mexican Revolution, 1910–1914: The Diplomacy of Anglo-American Conflict*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968, 27.

108. Thomas A. Bailey, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese-American Crises*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934, 318.

109. File, circa 1856, 6–16–139, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*.

110. File, circa 1896, 11–10–49, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*.

111. Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Haiti and the Great Powers, 1902–1915*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988, 29.

112. U.S. Congress, Senate, 62nd Congress, 2nd Session, Document No. 694, "Lands on Magdalena Bay," 23 May 1912. See Philander C. Knox to F. H. Allen, 17 August 1911.

113. Grover, "Maneuvering for Magdalena Bay," 278–279.

114. Memorandum, 25 June 1918, Reel 1, #33, *U.S. Military Intelligence Reports, Japan, 1918–1941, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland*. See also Memorandum from Mexico Embassy in Tokyo, 31 July 1916, L-E-801, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico, Mexico City*. This discusses arms and equipment and machines for making bullets. Memorandum for Mexico City Embassy in Tokyo, 31 May 1917, L-E-801, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico*. A machine for making rifles and cannons is discussed here.

115. See Japan–Mexico Treaty, 1923, 2.5.1.102, *Diplomatic Archives of Japan, Tokyo*. See also Alfonso ZabreTeja, *La Esperanza Hati-Ke*, Mexico: Compania Editora Latino-Americana, no date, circa 1923. A mysterious Japanese character, said to be based on a real person, helps defend the town versus invaders.

116. According to the Plan, "No leader should enroll a stranger in the ranks [of the liberating army] unless he were Latin, Negro or Japanese." See Calvin Warner Hines, "The Mexican Punitive Expedition of 1916," M.A. thesis, Trinity College, 1961, 22.

117. Harris and Sadler, "The Plan of San Diego and the Mexican–United States War Crisis of 1916," 407. See also *New York Times*, 23 January 1920. This Japanese money, "10,000 pesos and \$1000 in American gold . . . was intended for an American Negro who had been hired to instigate a mutiny among the Negro troops on the border."

118. William Hanson to Judge Kearful, 7 November 1919, Folder 177, 225.3[4], *William F. Buckley Papers*. See also Berta Ulloa, *La Revolucion Intervenida: Relaciones Diplomaticas entre Mexico y Estados Unidos (1910–1914)*, Guanajuato: El Colegio de Mexico, 1971.

119. Harris and Sadler, *The Border and the Revolution*, 8, 98. See also *Memoirs of Pancho Villa*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965, 397. According to Villa, "the captain of a Japanese warship also came to see me. He told me at once that his government had sent him to talk to me about the unfriendly relations between the United States and Japan and the possibility of a war between these two countries; he added that Japan's armies and her fleet were already preparing for it. 'Sr. General Villa,' said this officer, 'We Japanese have to take a great deal from the leaders and citizens of the United States. They are an ambitious nation; they wish to dominate everywhere for their own aggrandizement.'"

120. Report by George Holman, 24 October 1919, Reel 13, #0072, *Surveillance Papers*.

121. See "Memorandum for Colonel Enochs," 9 May 1921, Reel 22, 0198, *Surveillance Papers*. Japan is "disseminating propaganda among the Negroes and endeavoring to make the Negroes believe that separate schools which have been established

for the Japanese will be followed by a law establishing separate schools for the colored children. They have appealed to the Negroes to support the Japanese and help them fight the alien land law. Thru their efforts 'Capt. T. M. McKinney' a Los Angeles Negro formed the American League of Democracy which sent out literature against the alien land law which was furnished and paid for by the Japanese Farmer's Protective Association. The Japanese are striving to stir up race feeling stating that the Negroes and Japanese must stick together and resist the injuries of the whites."

122. Marc Gallichio, *The African American Encounter with Japan and China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895-1945*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000, 42-43.

123. *The Messenger*, 3 (Number 3, August 1921): 225.

124. Ellis, *Race, War and Surveillance*, 197.

125. *California Eagle*, 5 September 1914. See also *California Eagle*, circa 7 February 1914, no date. Just as Negroes were the target of enmity in the South, those of Japanese origin played that role in the Far West. Thus, "Senator Jones of Washington" demanded that "none of the appropriation should be available for any state which discriminated against the Negro." Southern senators objected, and one "asked Senator Jones whether or not he would be willing to have the Japanese on the Pacific Coast administer the education funds carried by the bill. Senator Jones replied that the Japanese are not citizens of the United States and said that he would certainly oppose allowing the Japanese to administer the funds." Headline: "Jones Puts Negroes above the Japanese."

126. *California Eagle*, 11 December 1915.

127. *California Eagle*, 29 January 1916.

128. *California Eagle*, 19 June 1915.

129. Irving Goff McCann, *With the National Guard on the Border: Our National Military Problem*, St. Louis: C.V. Mosby, 1917, 53.

130. Remarks of the Hon. William H. Murray of Oklahoma in the House of Representatives, 7 November 1913, Box 6, Series 501, *Thomas Catron Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque*. The congressman added, "The pages of history are replete with the rise and fall not only of nations but of races. . . . Is history to repeat itself and at the end of another hundred years to witness the dawn of the twenty-first century with the world's domination by Japanese and Chinese, . . . in point of number and empire? The Mexican problem may answer this question." His solution? "I would issue another military order breaking up the big estates in Mexico and order them sold in small tracts to any purchaser of the white race" and spur the "white colonization of Mexico" and beyond, since "it does not violate our own interests to own every foot of land from here to the Panama Canal." He saw a clear distinction between the threat from Germany versus that from Japan: "To colonize America by European monarchies would be to destroy our Republic but would preserve white civilization. To colonize the American continent with the Asiatic races would destroy our civilization as well as the Republic." There were

“worse things than war. To be dominated by an inferior race or to witness the destruction of the Christian civilization of the white race is a hundredfold worse than war.”

131. Jeffrey B. Perry, ed., *A Hubert Harrison Reader*, Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2001, 309.

132. Irving P. Roswell to Senator Fall, 22 January 1920, Box 93, Folder 14, *Albert Fall Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino*.

133. Telegram from Donald Shorb, 7 April 1916, Box 8128, Record Group 94, 2377632, *Papers of the Office of the Adjutant General, Mexican Border, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

134. W. Dirk Raat, *Revolutos: Mexico's Rebels in the United States, 1903–1923*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1981, 266–267. For more insight on the Plan of San Diego, see Frederick Funston Papers (particularly Box 2, Folders 2–4) at the Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka.

NOTES TO THE EPILOGUE

1. See Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986; Gerald Horne, *Black Liberation/Red Scare: Ben Davis and the Communist Party*, Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994.

2. *New York Times*, 9 September 1922.

3. Henry O. Flipper to Albert Fall, 23 April 1923, Box 5, Folder 6, *Albert Fall Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque*.

4. Senator Fall to Hon. James Wadsworth, 9 September 1922, Box 80, Folder 20, *Albert Fall Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California*.

5. David Stratton, *Tempest over Teapot Dome: The Story of Albert B. Fall*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998, 82–83.

6. Arnold Shankman, “The Image of Mexico and the Mexican-American in the Black Press, 1890–1935,” *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 3 (Number 2, Summer 1975): 43–56, 45.

7. *The Messenger*, 5 (Number 3, March 1923): 632–633.

8. Emory Tolbert, *The UNIA and Black Los Angeles: Ideology and Community in the American Garvey Movement*, Los Angeles: CAAS, UCLA, 1980, 39. See also *Negro World*, 24 March 1923.

9. *New York Amsterdam News*, 7 March 1923.

10. *New York Times*, 19 April 1923.

11. *New York Times*, 17 November 1922.

12. See Delores Nason McBroom, “Harvests of Gold: African American Boosterism, Agriculture and Investment in Allensworth and Little Liberia,” in Lawrence B. De Graaf et al., eds., *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California*, Seattle: University of Washington, 2001, 149–180, 169.

Notes to the Epilogue

13. See Helen Delpar (hdelpar@tenhoor.as.ua.edu to Gerald Horne (gchorne@email.unc.edu), 19 December 2000 (in possession of author).
14. Karl Jacoby, "Between North and South: The Alternative Borderlands of William H. Ellis and the African-American Colony, 1895," unpublished paper, 2001 (in possession of author).
15. *Negro World*, 15 September 1923.
16. Paul Robeson, Jr., *The Undiscovered Paul Robeson: An Artist's Journey, 1898–1939*, New York: John Wiley, 2001, 35.
17. Clipping, 1 May 1923, Vertical File, "Military Posts—Arizona—Huachuca—1900–1920s," *Arizona Historical Society, Tucson*.
18. Henry Burton to Senator H. O. Bursum, 15 July 1922, Vertical Files "Afro-Americans—Columbus, New Mexico," *Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque*.
19. Ira Wagnon, Arizona Highway Department to Governor George Hunt, 8 February 1926, Box 1, *Governors' Files, 1923–1933, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
20. Mrs. M. R. Peralta to Governor Hunt, 23 January 1925, Box 1, *Governors' Files, 1923–1933, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
21. Governor Hunt to Mrs. M. R. Peralta, 23 January 1925, Box 2, *Governors' Files, Arizona State Archives*.
22. Peralta to Hunt.
23. Gilbert Mers to F. M. Kelley, 1 September 1936, Box 37, *Papers of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific, Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University*.
24. Secretary to the Governor to Hon. Joaquin Terrazas, 6 May 1926, Box 1, *Governors' Files, 1923–1933, Arizona State Archives, Phoenix*.
25. Scott Tadao Kurashige, "Transforming Los Angeles: Black and Japanese American Struggles for Racial Equality in the 20th Century," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2000, 261, 243.
26. I. L. Shauer to State Senator Collins, 28 February 1935, MS 164, File 13, *Thomas Collins Papers, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson*.
27. Memorandum from U.S. Embassy in Mexico, 8 July 1932, Reel 3, #867, *U.S. Military Intelligence Reports: Mexico, 1919–1941, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina*.
28. Memorandum from U.S. Embassy in Mexico, 29 April 1937, Reel 5, #88, *U.S. Military Intelligence Reports: Mexico, 1919–1941*.
29. T. Lindsay Baker and Julie P. Baker, eds., *The WPA Oklahoma Slave Narratives*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996, 343, 440. Another resident who crossed the border during this era was Basilio Ramos, who may have been the notorious defendant in the Plan of San Diego trial. He was allowed to return to Mexico in 1929. See Rafael Jiminez Castro to Consul in El Paso, 23 August 1929, IV-161-113, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico*.
30. Questions to Mexican Embassy in the United States, 23 July 1943, III-655-2, *Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivo Historico*.

31. Adolph W. Newton with Winston Eldridge, *Better Than Good: A Black Sailor's War, 1943–1945*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1999, 29.
32. Hazel Rowley, *Richard Wright: The Life and Times*, New York: Holt, 2001.
33. James Nathaniel Hughes to Langston Hughes, 13 January 1931, Box 3, *Langston Hughes Papers*, Yale University.
34. James Nathaniel Hughes to Langston Hughes, 4 August 1931, *Langston Hughes Papers*.
35. James Nathaniel Hughes to Langston Hughes, 17 December 1932, *Langston Hughes Papers*.
36. Arnold Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes: Volume I: 1902–1941: I, Too, Sing America*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986, 303–304, 32, 35, 40, 42.
37. Lizzetta LeFalle-Collins and Shifra M. Goldman, *In the Spirit of Resistance, En El Espíritu de la Resistencia*, New York: American Federation of Artists, 1996, 10, 44, 45, 51, 55. See Jose Clemente Orozco, *Autobiografía*, Ciudad de Mexico: Ediciones Occidente, 1945, 65. See also Aguirre Beltran, *La Poblacion Negra de Mexico: Estudio Ethnografico*, Ciudad de Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1946.
38. Barry Singer, *Black and Blue: The Life and Lyrics of Andy Razaf*, New York: Schirmer, 1992, 176. See also Antoinette Galotola, “From Bohemianism to Radicalism: The Art and Political Context of the Liberator, 1918–1924,” Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York Graduate Center, 2000.
39. *Chicago Defender*, 15 March 1924.
40. *Chicago Defender*, 17 May 1924. Thanks to Douglas Henry Daniels for this insight on music in Mexico.
41. Gene Santoro, *Myself When I Am Real: The Life and Music of Charles Mingus*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, 147, 148, 383.
42. Alyn Shipton, *Groovin' High: The Life of Dizzie Gillespie*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, 330. Note that the grandson of Booker T. Washington, an accomplished jazz clarinetist, who once played with Louis Armstrong and Count Basie, migrated permanently to Brazil in 1937 and continued his musical career there until his death in 1969. See Louis Harlan et al., eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers, Volume 2, 1860–1889*, 237.
43. John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, 425. The black actor Lennie Bluett, born in 1919 in Los Angeles, eventually sought exile in Vancouver, “where [he] first got a taste of what it meant to be truly free, to do what he wanted without fear or persecution. ‘Every Canadian I meet today I tell them what a lovely country they have, because when I was [there] I could walk into any restaurant and get a cup of coffee, go into any barber shop and not worry about where the barber shop was or did they do Black hair and get my haircut,’ he said. ‘I could stop and get a sandwich and not have to think about where I could go or would I be served, and that’s why I tell every Canadian, ‘I love your country.’” He contrasted Los Angeles which he saw as a pit of Jim Crow. See *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 13 June 2002.

44. John B. Holway, *Blackball Stars: Negro League Pioneers*, Westport: Meckler, 1988, 360, 362.

45. See *El Paso Times*, 1 December 2001. Charlie Brown forty-five years earlier “became the first African-American athlete to compete in a major sport at a major university in not only Texas but the entire Confederate South.” He competed for the then Texas Western University.

46. Marvin X (Jackmon), *Somethin’ Proper: The Life and Times of a North American African Poet*, Castro Valley, California: Black Bird Press, 1998, 212, 215. See also LeFalle-Collins and Goldman, *In the Spirit of Resistance*, 13, 59.

47. See Mary Lee Nolan, “The Refugees: Flight from the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920),” paper given at the 37th Annual Meeting of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers, Oregon State University, Corvallis, 15 June 1974, *Mexican Revolution Oral History Project, Texas A&M University, College Station*.

48. *Los Angeles Times*, 14 April 2001.

49. See Gerald Horne, “The Betrayal of Black Los Angeles,” *Remarks: Newsletter of the Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities of the American Sociological Association*, 20 (Number 3, April 2002): 14, 15.

50. *New York Times*, 11 November 2001.

51. See Arnold Shankman, “The Image of Mexico and the Mexican-American in the Black Press, 1890–1935,” *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 3 (Number 2, Summer 1975): 43–56.

52. Diana Arnhalt, *A Gathering of Fugitives: American Political Expatriates in Mexico, 1948–1965*, Santa Maria, California: Archer, 2001, 84, 86.

53. *Los Angeles Times*, 17 September 1999. See also <http://www.imdb.com>. See also *New York Times*, 13 June 2004: The 1971 film *Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song* ends “famously”; “the hero, a canny amalgam of Old West outlaw and third-world revolutionary may have fled across the border into Mexico.” This movie—which was written and directed by the leading African American auteur, Melvin Van Peebles—was “one of the highest-grossing independent pictures” and “inspired” an entire genre of films.

Index

Page numbers in italic refer to illustrations.

- Abbott, John: draft dodger, 113
Abbott, Robert S.: *The Messenger*, 85
Adams, John Quincy: defense of slaves, 6;
 possibility of a multifront war, 6
African American press: on boycotting the
 military, 99; Houston Mutiny (1917),
 75–76; suppression in Texas, 79–80;
 Villa-Flipper connection, 43–44
African American soldiers: alleged deser-
 tion, 153, 225n. 76; borderland be-
 tween U.S. and Mexico, 20–21, 52, 53,
 55–56, 59–60, 62–63, 65–66, 97–98,
 101, 124; brothels, 141–143; Buffalo
 Soldiers (*see* Buffalo Soldiers); camp
 conditions, 134; as defenders of white
 supremacy, 21, 74, 86–87, 100, 109,
 134, 151, 178, 184; defense against
 “dangerous” Negroes, 116–117; desert-
 ers in Mexico, 136–137; a dispensable
 luxury, 184; Domingo on, 93; El Paso
 (Texas), 53, 60, 98–99; fear of effective
 ones, 153; fictional desertion to Mex-
 ico, 7–8; fitness for service in Mexico,
 152; Flipper on, 45; on front lines, 115;
 Harpoon on, 76; Houston (Texas), 8–9;
 importance to U.S. Army, 8, 60, 92,
 104–109, 110, 126, 146, 152, 194n. 6;
 importance to U.S. Customs Service,
 62; Johnson (Jack) and, 36; Kansas, 117;
 killing of by civilians, 111; Kingsville
 (Texas), 160; Ku Klux Klan, 65–66;
 labor unrest, 108; League for Democ-
 racy, 167; lynching of, 75; Mexican
 Americans, 128; Naco (Arizona), 59;
 New Mexico, 8; Nogales (Arizona),
 53; organizing black officers, 166–167;
 Philippines, 92, 93, 99; Pirtleville (Ari-
 zona), 106; post-Mexican Revolution,
 184; praise for, 153; racist conventions,
 141; recruitment ground, 112; removal
 from Texas, 99; resistance to segrega-
 tion, 56; “Seminole Maroons,” 20;

- African American soldiers (*Continued*)
 "Seminole Negro Indian Scouts," 20–21; smuggling in borderlands, 63, 65, 207n. 49; third-class citizens, 143; treatment of, 91, 134, 167, 184; use in defending Jim Crow, 86–87; Virginia, 117; voting rights for, 153; as "white," 184, 188; Wilson (Woodrow) and, 92–93; winning the West, 20–21, 52; World War I, 112–113
- African Americans: acquisition of Mexican oil lands, 183; in Alabama, 102; anarchism, 69, 70–71; Arizona, 60–61; arming them, debate about, 116–118, 133–134, 160, 166; barred from entering towns, 186; barring from military service, 117; with big weapons, 143; Bolshevism, 81; "border" to, 16; borderland between U.S. and Mexico, 184, 185, 188; California, 21; colonies in Mexico, 21–24, 81–85, 198n. 16; counterintelligence in Negro communities, 165; defined, 193n. 1 (intro); deportation to borderlands, 153; discouragement/bitterness among, 5–6; draft dodgers, 113, 126; draft exemptions, 114–115, 221n. 19; drafting Negroes to avoid drafting whites, 117–118; El Paso (Texas), 9; emigration (*see* Emigration of African Americans); enlistment, 118; enticement by Germany, 165–166, 168, 170, 171, 173, 175, 240n. 61; enticement by Japan, 175–176, 178–179, 246n. 121; enticement by Mexico, 164–165; Euro-American guilt about maltreatment of, 170; fears of uprisings by, 168; freedom in Mexico, 14, 32, 82, 86, 198n. 21; Germans and, 97, 174; Germany, 62; Great Migration from the South, 113–115, 117; Irish and, 97; Japan, 62; Japan distinguished from Japanese Americans, 191; killings in Mexico, 103; lower-case rendering of "Negro," 196n. 35; loyalty of, 111–116, 169; Mexican Americans, 5, 46; Mexican Revolution to, 6; in Mexico, 154–155; Mexico distinguished from Mexican Americans, 191; Mexico to, 14–15, 16, 82, 187–190; militancy, 165; miners/mining, 50; Native Americans, 157; opportunities for, 3–4; organizing, 115–118, 166–167; "passing" as Mexicans, 49–50; patriotism, 165; Pearl Harbor, 97–98; Plan of San Diego, 157, 162, 180; Princeton University, 156; refusal to perform military service, 115; relations with Mexican Americans, 9, 46–49, 55–57, 58, 61–62, 189, 191; relations with Mexicans, 92, 98, 102, 103, 128, 154–155, 182; rights for, 128, 153, 159; Seminoles, 90; socialism, 69; South African whites as, 138; surveillance of, 165; swindling of, 185; tools for, 244n. 97; Villa to, 10, 146–147; as "white," 184, 188; white women, 52; World War I, 156
- African Blood Brotherhood: support for Mexican Revolution, 140
- Afrikaners: in Mexican Revolution, 138
- Aguirre Berlanga, Manuel: encouragement of colonization, 82
- Alabama: emigration of blacks to Mexico, 21; enticement of Negroes by Germany, 170; Negroes in, 102; rumors of black migration to Mexico, 168–169
- Albuquerque (New Mexico): segregation, 55
- Alcocer, Maxime and Catarino: letter about Bolshevism, 81
- Allensworth, Allen: Brownsville Affair, 99; California Colony and Home Protection Association, 99–100
- Alperovich, M. S.: on Plan of San Diego, 172
- American League for Democracy. *See* League for Democracy
- Americans: Mexican view of, 101
- Amerindians. *See* Native Americans
- Anarchism: California, 70; Mexico, 70; Native Americans, 102, 127; Negroes, 70–71

Index

- Andrews, R. L.: on Villa, 204n. 70
- Anti-Semitism: lynching of Frank, 105;
U.S. Army, 105
- Antimiscegenation laws: Arizona, 68; El Paso (Texas), 46–47; Texas, 9; Virginia, 68
- “Apache Kid”: Buffalo Soldiers, 140
- Arizona: African Americans in, 60–61;
antimiscegenation laws, 68; *Birth of a Nation* banning, 9, 111, 179; black emigration to, 62; black employment, 58; blackface productions, 60; Chicanos, 118–119; colonization of, 83–84; deportation of blacks, 84; deportation of miners, 92, 108; draft dodgers, 107; early black settlers, 12; IWW, 94–95; Ku Klux Klan, 65–66; labor shortages, 106; labor unrest, 107–109, 120, 122; Mexican Americans in, 4; Mexicans in, 118, 124; militia, 127; miners/mining, 50, 71, 92, 107–108, 119, 120, 122; mobilization of National Guard, 107, 109; radicalism, 71; rifle clubs, 109; rumors of uprisings, 161
- Arkansas: enticement of Negroes by Germany, 170; registration for the draft, 225n. 76
- Armijo, Rafael: sales to Confederates, 18
- Arnhalt, Diana: on Euro-Americans in Mexico, 191
- Ashbridge, George: Flipper controversy, 41
- Atlanta (Georgia): Flipper in, 45
- Austin (Texas): black flight from, 87; enticement of Mexican Americans by Mexico, 164
- Baja California: African American colonies, 81–83; black musicians in exile, 189; in *Blue Streak*, 192; break-away republic plan, 177; Flores Magon forces in, 137; IWW in, 135; Japanese purchase, 176–177; socialist republic scheme, 138
- Baker, A.Y.: on Ramos, 163
- Baker, Newton: Mexican sympathizers, 124; reports about treatment of Negro soldiers, 134
- Baldwin, Roger Sherman: Spanish Americans’ view of the Mexican War, 123
- Baltimore, Charles W.: Houston Mutiny (1917), 74
- Barrales, Joe: on Punitive Expedition, 154–155
- Barrio, Tobias: killing of, 149
- Baskin, Andrew C.: appeal for soldiers, 131
- Beckworth, Jim: accusation of Mexican sympathies, 14
- Beecher, Carl Christian: Africans in Mexico and U.S., 13
- Belize (British Honduras): arms trafficking, 137; slavery, 137; Turkish populations, 172
- Bell, Charley: arrest for smoking opium, 208n. 61
- Bellinger, R. P.: Negro labor, 114
- Bicket, Thomas: draft exemptions, 105
- Birth of a Nation* (film): Arizona banning, 9, 111; protest against, 179
- Bisbee (Arizona): *Bisbee Daily Review*, 62–63; labor unrest, 108, 111; Mexicans in, 122; NAACP chapter, 58; unrest, 92
- Bisbee Daily Review*: Japanese border crossers, 62–63
- Blackdom (New Mexico): Buffalo Soldiers, 61
- Blacks: defined, 193n. 1 (intro). *See also* African Americans
- Blue Streak* (film): ending, 192
- Bluett, Lennie: exile in Vancouver, 250n. 43
- Bolshevism: blacks, 81; U.S. government’s concern, 95
- Bontemps, Arna: borderlands racism, 59; racial hostility in Los Angeles, 51
- Borderland between U.S. and Mexico, 46–68; 1915 raids, 160; African American–Mexican American relations, 9, 46–49, 55–57; Apaches, 158; appeals for soldiers, 130–131; arms trafficking, 62, 207n. 49; bête noire of, 158;

Borderland (*Continued*)

- blacks in, 51; black-white dyad, 46; "border" to blacks, 16; brothels, 141–143; cattle smuggling, 64, 96; Chicanos in, 118; color line, 68; crisis in, 128–132; deaths of Anglo-Americans, 17; depiction of Mexicans, 103; deporting Negroes to, 153; drug smuggling, 63–64; as a frontier, 59; German arms caches, 177; German border crossers, 63; horse thievery, 96; Japanese border crossers, 62–63; Ku Klux Klan, 65–66; legacy of bitterness, 185; level of antagonism in, 101; Mexican strategy, 7; Mexican sympathizers, 122–123, 124; military preparedness, 128, 130; minorities in, 48; "mixed" couples/families, 47, 48; mobilization along, 141, 146; murders of Mexicans, 183; National Guard, 106, 126, 146; Negro soldiers, 20–21, 52, 53, 55–56, 59–60, 62–63, 65–66, 97–98, 101; Negroes in, 184, 185, 188; New York militia, 125; opportunities for blacks, 50; Plan of San Diego, 236n. 7; race *vs.* nationality, 59; racial microclimates, 57–58; racial prejudice, 50–52, 59; racial violence, 157; radicalism among blacks, 81; recruitment of Anglos by U.S., 124–125; reign of terror, 238n. 29; removal of Negro soldiers from Texas, 99; Rio Grande River, 16–17; smuggling, 62–65, 207n. 49; South compared to, 124; violence, 157, 160–161; white supremacy, 66–68, 80
- Boston Advertiser*: Villa-Flipper connection, 43–44
- Bouldin, G. W.: Houston mutineers, 75
- Box, Wiley: murder of, 60–61
- Boyd, Charles: chauvinism, 147; leadership, 148, 151
- Branch, Elija: Negro self-defense, 169
- Brawley Daily News*: appeal for soldiers, 131
- Briggs, Cyril: *The Crusader*, 85, 87
- Brinson, Theodore: constitutional rights, 128
- Britain: agent for, 243n. 84; American domination of Mexico, 170–171
- British Honduras (Belize): arms trafficking, 137; slavery, 137; Turkish populations, 172
- Brown, Charley: drug dealing, 64–65
- Brown, Edward N.: on Negroes in Alabama, 102
- Brown, John Hertz: South Carolina militia, 116–117
- Brown, Larmon: Houston Mutiny (1917), 75
- Brownsville (Texas): avoidance by slave owners, 16; Brownsville Affair (1906), 98–99; killing of Negro porter, 73; longshore work, 185–186; Negroes barred from entering, 186; raids around, 240n. 55; rioting, 186; Wright (Richard) on, 188
- Bryant, Lewis: draft dodger, 113
- Buckley, William F., Sr.: Bolshevism in U.S., 81; Fall and, 42, 182; Flipper and, 42; San Diego (Texas), 81; Sanborn-Johnson encounter, 35
- Buda, Mario: Mexico, 70
- Buffalo Soldiers, 88–109; 9th Cavalry, 91, 100; 10th Cavalry, 91, 134, 136, 146, 147, 150, 155; 24th Infantry, 45, 74, 75, 80–81, 91, 99, 130, 142–143, 149; 25th Infantry, 91, 98; African American–Mexican relations, 92; to African Americans, 92–93; Anglo settlers, 92; "Apache Kid," 140; Apache Scouts, 123, 213n. 1; Apaches, 90; area of deployment, 90; atrocities, 213n. 1; black radicalism, 92; Blackdom (New Mexico), 61; Brownsville Affair (1906), 98–99; campaigns against Native Americans, 73–74; Carrizal, battle of, 74, 136–137, 146–155, 234n. 110; Cheyennes, 97; Columbus (New Mexico), 80–81, 141, 142–145, 145, 184; Comanches, 90, 94; as defenders of white supremacy, 21, 74, 86–87, 100,

- 109, 134, 151, 178, 184; desertion, 88, 91–92, 130, 136–137, 153; domestic unrest, 92, 111; elite unit, 219n. 99; escorting white prisoners, 140; fitness for service in Mexico, 152; Fort Huachuca, 139, 140, 184; Germany, 134; Geronimo, 90, 140, 213n. 1; Giago on, 88; importance of, 94, 118, 130, 146, 152; IWW, 94–95; killings of Negroes by Mexicans, 103; Kiowas, 90; leaders, 88, 134; members, 91; Mescalero Apaches, 90, 97; in Mexican Revolution, 74, 93, 96, 103; Mexicans, 90, 92, 213n. 1; name, 91; National Guard, 109; to Native Americans, 88–90; Negro pride, 155; *New York Times* on, 142; “Nigger Hill,” 94; only defeat, 146; percent of Indian fighting cavalry, 91; Pewewardy on, 90; picture of, 89; provisioning of, 219n. 99; re-enlistment, 142; Reconstruction, 94; respect for, 91; Rodeo (New Mexico), 118; salary, 91, 143; spying against, 139–140; treatment of, 91, 134, 167, 184; tribes fought by, 90, 94; Victorio War (1879–1880), 96–97; Villa, pursuit of, 96, 132, 147, 149, 235n. 132; white settlers, 90–91; winning the West, 20, 96; Yaquis, 94, 137
- Bureau of Investigation: surveillance of blacks, 79
- Burger, Edwards: appeal for soldiers, 130
- Burkhead, L. L.: Buffalo Soldiers are coming!, 142
- Burleson, Albert Sidney: plantations of, 142
- Burton, Henry: Negro soldiers in Columbus (New Mexico), 184
- Caballero, Luis: Constitutionalist army, 164
- Cabiness, Sara: lynching of, 77
- Calexico (California): Mexican sympathizers, 140
- Calexico Investment Company: Baja colonization, 83
- California: anarchism, 70; black colony in, 99–100; on black soldiers, 93; bombings of Japanese, 186–187; early black settlers, 13; employment of aliens, 50; Mexicans in, 123, 132; National Guard deployment, 131; opposition to blacks, 21; racial prejudice, 52; Taft on, 70; water works for, 131; Yankee invasion of, 15. *See also* Baja California
- California Eagle*: enticement of Negroes by Germany, 168; Japan’s fight against racism, 179; Negroes *vs.* Japanese in Far West, 247n. 125; owners, 147; response to Pearl Harbor, 97–98; Villa in, 147
- Camden (New Jersey): emigration of blacks to, 113–114
- Cameron, Lucille: Johnson (Jack) and, 37
- Campanella, Roy: Mexico, 190
- Campbell, John W.: voting rights for Negro soldiers, 153
- Campbell, T. M.: films of Johnson-Jeffries match, 26
- Canada: emigration of blacks to, 250n. 43
- Canada, George: treatment of Negro soldiers, 134
- Cantu, Esteban: Baja California breakaway plan, 177
- Cardenas, Lazaro: wife, 191
- Carlton, Robert Lloyd: California’s early black settlers, 13
- Carranza, Venustiano: Flipper on, 42; Johnson (Jack) and, 30, 32, 33–34, 36, 37; *The Messenger*, 85–86; opportunities for Negroes, 3–4; Plan of San Diego, 172; raids around Brownsville (Texas), 240n. 55; recruitment in U.S., 159; Villa’s raid on Columbus (New Mexico), 172
- Catlett, Elizabeth: Kahlo and, 190; Mexico, 190; Siquieros and, 190
- Caynor, Grover: on Chicano soldiers, 120
- Center (Texas): mob justice, 77
- Central America: antiforeigner sentiment, 24; Christmas (Lee) in, 231n. 49; emigration of blacks to, 21; Negroes in, 24

- Cerny, Charles: on Chicano soldiers, 120
 Chandler, Harry: Viljoen and, 138
Cheat, The (film): protest against, 179
 Chesnutt, Charles: *The Messenger*, 85; on Negro patriotism, 105
Chicago Defender: Jack Johnson's arrival in Mexico City, 31; left-wing Negro press and, 85; Prof. Jones's article, 77–78; publisher, 85; Sanborn–Johnson encounter, 34; suppression in Texas, 80; to Texas Rangers, 84
 Chicano soldiers: beatings of, 121–122; discrimination against, 120–121
 Chicanos: Arizona, 118–119; arming them, debate about, 118; defined, 193n. 1(intro); Flipper and dispossession of, 3, 39–40, 128; loyalty of, 118–122; New Mexico, 118–119. *See also* Hispanics; Latinos; Mexican Americans
 Chiles, Nick: on Negro regiments, 117
 Chinese: racial prejudice, 50
 Chinese people: in Mexico, 177
 Christianity: Shillady on, 71–72
 Christmas, Lee: Central American armies, 231n. 49
 Church, R. R.: *The Messenger*, 85
 Civil rights: Cold War, 90
 Civil War: Mexico, 18–19
 Cleland, Max: on Flipper, 40
 Clifton (Arizona): white supremacy, 67–68
 Clint (Texas): chasing blacks in, 57
 Clinton, Bill: Flipper pardoned, 3
 Coffigny, Mayra: skin color, 191
 Coffroth, James W.: Johnson–Dempsey fight, 181
 Cold War: civil rights, 90
 Collins, Thomas: bombings of Japanese, 186–187
 Colorado: mines, 58
 Columbus (New Mexico): Buffalo Soldiers, 80–81, 141, 142–145, 145, 184; drug smuggling, 63–64; emigration of blacks to Mexico, 81; Houston mutineers, 75; IWW, 143; vigilance committees, 80–81; Villa's raid, 8, 76, 124, 125–126, 145, 147, 172; Villa's spies, 139
 Confederate States of America: negotiations with Mexico, 7; supporters in Clifton (Arizona), 67–68; Tejanos opposition to, 18; Texas in, 15; veterans, 19, 42, 199n. 38
 Cooke, F. X.: on Carrizal, 150
 Copway, George: unification of Native Americans, 175
Coureur de bois, Le (Ferry): Comanches in, 174
 Covarrubias, Miguel: African American–Mexican American relations, 189
 Crafts, Wilbur: Jack Johnson's alleged white slavery, 37
 Crawford (Nebraska): Buffalo Soldiers, 90–91
Crisis, The: 24th Infantry, 80–81; Du Bois and, 7; editor, 85; fictional desertion of Negroes to Mexico, 7–8; laughing and singing at Carrizal, 151–152; left-wing Negro press and, 85; Mexicans' view of Americans, 101; NAACP, 7; to Texas Rangers, 84; on Woodrow Wilson, 156
Crusader, The: Briggs and, 85, 87; Marxism, 85; war between U.S. and Japan or Mexico, 178
 Cuba: Johnson (Jack) and, 27–28, 29, 30; mixed fights in, 27–28
 Cumberland, Charles: 1915 raids along the border, 160
 Cuney, Maud: Du Bois and, 49; “passing” by, 49–50
 Custer, George: 9th Infantry, 91
Dallas Express: suppression of, 79
 Dandridge, Ray: Mexico, 190
 Daniel, W. L.: draft exemptions for Negroes, 114
 Daniels, Douglas: on Durham, 49
 Davidson, Joseph C.: dishonorable discharge, 107
 Davis, Jefferson: conquest of western Native Americans, 17; New Zealand refuge for Confederates, 199n. 38

- Davis, Thomas E.: NAACP membership, 81
- Davis, Westmoreland: draft exemptions, 105; Negro regiments in Virginia, 117
- De la Rosa, Luis: Carranzista, 167; raids by, 160, 240n. 55
- De la Torre, General: Sanborn-Johnson encounter, 35
- December 1910: Woolf on, 5
- Del Rio (Texas): rioting in, 142–143
- Dempsey, Jack: Jack Johnson fight, 181
- Denton, Richard: arms trafficking in Belize, 137
- Diaz, Porfirio: challenges to, 99; Hughes (Langston) on, 188; ouster, 128; raiding Indians, 21
- Dickson, James: Indian ownership of land, 6
- Dixiecrats: limitations on emigration by Negroes, 183; white supremacy, 146
- Domingo, W. A.: on Negro soldiers, 93
- Dominguez, M. Y.: injury to, 98
- Douglas (Arizona): arms trafficking, 207n. 49; drug smuggling, 63–64, 65; Mexicans in, 95; raid on, 137
- Draper, Arthur J.: communications with Negroes in North Carolina, 168
- Dreben, Sam: overseas fighting, 231n. 49
- Du Bois, W. E. B.: on Carrizal, 151–152; *The Crisis*, 7; Cuney and, 49; fear of effective Negro soldiers, 153; Flipper's characterization of Negro soldiers, 45; German churches in U.S., 175; on Houston Mutiny (1917), 75; importance of Negro soldiers to U.S. Army, 126; on IWW, 94–95; Lippmann and, 153; on Los Angeles, 52; military preparedness on the borderlands, 128; NAACP, 52; on Nogales (Arizona), 53; on Reconstruction, 153; socialism, 72; Spingarn and, 165; suitable foes for white Americans, 152–153; support for Young, 153–154; on Texas, 52; U.S. entry into WWI, 165
- Durham, Eddie: Spanish language, 49
- East St. Louis (Illinois): race riot, 166
- Eichenlaub, Carl M.: on IWW, 135
- El Paso (Texas), 53–57; African American – Mexican American relations, 9, 55–57; African American community, 53; antimiscegenation laws, 46–47; attack on Latinos, 103–104; beatings of Mexicans and Mexican Americans, 66; black population, 87; drug smuggling, 63–64; Flipper in, 43; Jewish community, 66; Jim Crow laws, 57; Ku Klux Klan, 66; Marshall on, 66; Mexican Consul, 4; “mixed” families, 47; Negro soldiers, 53, 60, 98–99; racial strife, 53; rioting, 92; schools, 47; segregation, 47, 53–54, 55, 56; streetcars, 56; Villa sympathizers, 122; white primary, 9, 53
- Ellington, Duke: “hottest gin mill” during Harlem Renaissance, 189
- Ellis, R. H.: Villa and, 172
- Ellis, William: Ethiopia, 22; Negro colony in Mexico, 22–23, 83; Wall Street career, 22
- Emigration of African Americans: from Alabama, 21; to Arizona, 62; to Camden (New Jersey), 113–114; to Canada, 250n. 43; to Central America, 21; from Columbus (New Mexico), 81; to Guatemala, 24; Jack Johnson's emigrationism, 28, 34, 83; to Liberia, 21; limitations on emigration, 183; to Mexico, 6, 10–11, 21–24, 81, 84–85, 183, 192, 251n. 53; from Mississippi, 114; Negro elite, 83; from New Orleans (Louisiana), 24, 81, 94; Reconstruction, 21, 24; rumors of black migration to Mexico, 168–169; from the South, 115; U.S. authorities, 84
- Epps, J. S.: charges against, 170
- Equality: advocates for, 72; national security threats, 112; Shillady and, 72; social equality, 128, 135
- Erickson, Jacob: *Birth of a Nation* banning, 111
- Europe: racial aspect of war in, 180
- Exploitation Company: Hearsts and, 129

- Fall, Albert: on arming Chicanos, 120; on blacks in New Mexico, 58; on draft dodgers in Mexico, 126; Flipper and, 3, 39, 41, 42–43, 44, 182; Mexican plot against, 144; Mexican Revolution's effect on, 182; offer to join the military, 107; on Plan of San Diego, 236n. 7; Teapot Dome scandal, 143–144, 182
- Farrell, Horace: in Mexico, 135–136
- Ferrer y Guardia, Francisco: murder of, 70
- Ferry, Gabriel: *Le Coureur de bois*, 174
- Flipper, Henry O., 38–45; Alaskan railroads, 40; anticlericalism, 42; Atlanta (Georgia), 45; Buckley and, 42, 182; on Carranza, 42; Cleland on, 40; Confederate veterans, 42; Department of Justice, 39–40; dismissal from U.S. Army, 2, 39; dispossession of Chicanos, 3, 39–40, 128; double dispossession, 40; El Paso (Texas), 43; Fall and, 3, 39, 41, 42–43, 44, 182; Greene and, 41; home state, 40; on Huerta, 43; intelligence reports by, 44; on intervention in Mexican Revolution, 42–43, 136; Leiker on, 40; a marginal man, 182; McAdoo and, 39; Mexican land laws, 39–40; on Mexican women, 41; Mexico, 39, 44, 45; Military Academy of Chapultepec, 40–41; on Negro soldiers, 45; Olney and, 39; pardoning of, 3; picture of, 38; poverty, 40, 43, 45; Reynolds and, 40; Spanish speaker, 39; in Venezuela, 181–182; Villa and, 42–44, 136; West Point, 2, 38–39; white women, 2
- Flores Magon, Ricardo: ancestry, 233n. 84; followers of, 70; IWW, 135; social equality, 135; supporters in Baja California, 137; Yaquis, 135
- Florida: fitness of recruits, 125; statehood's effects, 18
- Folsom (New Mexico): Negroes in, 47
- Fontes, Paulino: Johnson (Jack) and, 32
- Forbes, Ernest: on Huerta, 127
- Ford, John: Negroes in Mexico, 198n. 21
- Fouche, Luis N.: Negro colony in Mexico, 22
- Fowler, James: Colored Colonization Company of San Diego, 23
- Franca, Joe A.: on Chicano soldiers, 121
- France: Maximilian and, 7; Mexico, 19; white racism, 86
- Frank, Leo: lynching, 121
- Franklin, Benjamin: Germans to, 175
- Frazier, E. Franklin: *The Messenger*, 85
- Galveston (Texas): Johnson (Jack) and, 18; slave port, 18
- Garcia, Jose: on Chicano soldiers, 121
- Garvey, Marcus: *Negro World* and, 183
- Gates, Louise: on German intermarriage, 175
- Georgia: enticement of Negroes by Germany, 170; “hunting niggers” in, 134; “Little Georgia,” 187–188; lynching, 52–53, 121; rumors of black migration to Mexico, 168; walking to New Mexico from, 61
- Germans: African Americans and, 97, 174; attitude toward slavery, 173–174; to Franklin, 175; in Haiti, 175, 176; intermarriage by, 175; Irish compared to, 174; in Mexico, 172, 176, 180; Native Americans and, 174–175; sabotage by, 242n. 67; U.S. foreign policy, 126
- Germany: Buffalo Soldiers, 134; enticement of African Americans, 165–166, 168, 170, 171, 173, 175, 240n. 61; enticement of Mexican Americans, 175; enticement of Native Americans, 175; IWW, 70; Jim Crow leverage for, 173; Johnson on, 29–30; lynching, 173; Mexican Revolution, 7; Mexico, 31, 62, 105, 166, 169–170, 171; Negroes, 62; Plan of San Diego, 157, 167, 168; racism, 173; United States, 170–171; U.S.'s “Negro problem,” 166
- Geronimo: Buffalo Soldiers, 90, 140, 213n. 1
- Giago, Tim: on Buffalo Soldiers, 88
- Gillespie, Dizzy: Mexico, 189–190

- Givens, Williams: deserters in Mexican units, 136
- Gleaves, William: British agent, 243n. 84; IWW, 70–71
- Gold, Mike: Johnson (Jack) and, 32
- Goldman, Emma: African Americans, 69; IWW, 72
- Gordon, Linda: on Western U.S., 50
- Great Britain: agent for, 243n. 84; American domination of Mexico, 170–171
- Great Migration from the South: Matthews (J. P.) on, 117; military service, 113–115
- Green, James: draft dodger, 113
- Greene, William C. “Bill”: Flipper and, 41
- Grimes, Junious: loyalty of Negroes, 115–116
- Groves, Junius G.: in Mexico, 23
- Guadalupe Hidalgo, Treaty of: United States, 40
- Guatemala: emigration of blacks to, 24; Negro emigrants in, 24
- Guerra, Deodoro: on Ramos, 162–163
- Guerrero, Vincente: abolitionism in Mexico, 13; unawareness of, 187
- Hachita (New Mexico): beating of Chicano soldiers, 121–122
- Hahn, James: election as mayor, 191
- Haiti: Germans in, 175, 176; Japanese to, 176
- Hall, D. H.: communications with Negroes in North Carolina, 115
- Hall, E. G.: black employment in Arizona, 58
- Hammond, Randall: biography, 118
- Hammons, George: on pursuit of Villa, 147
- Handy, W. C.: “passing” by Negroes, 49–50
- Hargrave, Nathaniel S.: black emigration from the South, 115
- Harlem (New York City): “hottest gin mill” during Harlem Renaissance, 189
- Harpoon* (San Antonio newspaper): on Negro soldiers, 76
- Harris, Abram: *The Messenger*, 85
- Harris, Clarence: fighting in Tijuana, 135
- Harris, George W.: on German agents, 171; on Jack Johnson, 27
- Harrison, George: AWOL, 220n. 12
- Harrison, Hubert: Ferrer y Guardia’s influence, 70; Harrison (Hubert) and, 169; Moens and, 169; on Negro soldiers, 92–93; racial aspect of war in Europe, 180
- Hawkins, W. Ashbie: on white supremacy, 152
- Hayden, Carl: National Guard, 109
- Haywood, Felix: freedom for blacks in Mexico, 14
- Hearst, William Randolph: film about Japanese–Mexican invasion of U.S., 180; owning Mexico, 129
- Henderson, George: attempted medical discharge, 106
- Henning, Harry: Chicano loyalty, 118
- Henry, Vida: NAACP membership, 81
- Hills, Frances: African American–Mexican American relations, 55–56; on miscegenation, 47; Villa’s shots, 9
- Hispanic Texans. *See* Tejanos
- Hispanics: defined, 193n. 1 (intro). *See also* Chicanos; Latinos; Mexican Americans
- Holguin, Mike: on Chicano soldiers, 121
- Hosier, J. Walter: draft exemptions, 105–106
- Houston, Sam: lost slaves, 17
- Houston Chronicle*: anti–Mexican racism, 159
- Houston Mutiny of 1917, 74–81; Baltimore (Charles) and, 74–81; black response, 75; Du Bois on, 75; events, 74; NAACP, 80; Negro press, 75–76; repercussions, 76–81
- Houston (Texas): Negro radicalism, 79; Negro soldiers, 8–9; rioting in, 36
- Howard, G. Volney: recruitment of National Guard, 124
- Huerta, Victoriano: Flipper on, 43; Forbes on, 127; target practice figure, 127

- Hughes, Charles Evans: murders of Mexicans in Texas, 183; Patterson and, 188
- Hughes, James Nathaniel: on Mexico, 188–189; on United States, 188
- Hughes, Langston: Bontemps and, 51; father, 21, 23; Mexico, 10, 188
- Hunt, Charles P.: Villa spy, 139
- Hunt, George: mobilization of National Guard, 107; racist joke, 67; on Yaquis, 95
- Indians. *See* Native Americans
- International Community Welfare League: Negro settlement rights in Mexico, 183
- Irish, the: African Americans and, 97; Germans compared to, 174; U.S. foreign policy, 126
- Ivy, James: *The Crisis*, 85; *The Messenger*, 85
- IWW (Industrial Workers of the World): Arizona, 94–95; in Baja California, 135; Buffalo Soldiers, 94–95; Columbus (New Mexico), 143; Du Bois on, 94–95; Eichenlaub on, 135; Flores Magon and, 135; Germany, 70; Gleaves and, 70–71; Goldman and, 72; Negroes allied with Mexicans, 135; Tampico (Mexico), 94–95; Tapia and, 209n. 4; U.S. government's concern, 95; Yaquis, 124
- Jackson, Carson: under attack, 147
- Japan: Baja California, 176–177; delegation to Villa, 246n. 119; enticement of African Americans, 175–176, 178–179, 246n. 121; fight against racism, 179; to Haitians, 176; Japanese Americans distinguished from, 191; Latin American countries, 187; McCann's prediction, 179; Mexican Revolution, 7; Mexico, 62, 171, 175, 176, 187; Negroes, 62; Plan of San Diego, 157, 168; in Plan of San Diego, 177–178; Roosevelt on, 176; United States, 170–171
- Japanese Americans: Japan distinguished from, 191
- Japanese people: American surveillance in Mexico, 177; in Far West, 247n. 125; Los Angeles, 186; in Mexico, 176, 177; Naco (Arizona), 175–176, 245n. 102
- Jeffries, James J.: Jack Johnson fight, 25–26; picture of, 26
- Jenkins, Myra Ellen: Pueblo Revolt (1680), 12
- Jews: anti-Semitism in U.S. Army, 105; El Paso (Texas), 66; Mexico, 217n. 72; Tucson (Arizona), 66
- Jim Crow: 9th Cavalry, 91; disenfranchisement of blacks, 69; El Paso as dividing line, 57; equating Mexicans and blacks, 68; flight from, 21; fugitives from, 48; leverage for Germany, 173; Los Angeles (California), 250n. 43; New Mexico, 57; use of Negro soldiers to defend it, 86–87; Wilson (Woodrow) and, 156
- Johnson, Carl: incentive for joining the Army, 143
- Johnson, Hiram: appeals for soldiers, 130–131
- Johnson, Jack (John A.), 25–38; ads for Jack Johnson's Land Company, 2; black solidarity with Mexicans, 35–36; bull fights, 31, 34; café, 34; Cameron and, 37; Carranza and, 30, 32, 33–34, 36, 37; Científicos, 32; communists, 32; conspicuousness, 29; Cuba, 27–28, 29, 30; Dempsey fight, 181; emigrationism, 28, 34, 83; exile, 25–26, 29–30; films of his bouts, 25–26; Fontes and, 32; Germany in WWI, 29–30; Gold and, 32; in Harlem, 37–38; Harris on, 27; Havana, 30; hometown, 18, 169; Jeffries fight, 25–26; Jorgensen on, 26–27; Leavenworth penitentiary, 29, 37; Madrid, 29–30; major transgressions, 37; Mexican military, 32, 35, 36; Mexico, 24, 25, 28, 30, 31, 33–36, 45; Mexico City, 24, 25, 31, 33, 34–35; Mijares and, 35, 36; Moore encounter, 34–35; movie star, 31; Negro masculinity, 93; Negro soldiers, 36; in

- Nuevo Laredo, 33, 34, 36; Panama, 36;
 Perez and, 35, 36; picture of, 26; racial
 avenger, 35; Sanborn encounter, 34–
 35, 86, 202n. 34; Shipman on, 32; soli-
 darity with Mexican Revolution, 2,
 35–36, 111; surrender to U.S. authori-
 ties, 1, 10–11, 37, 73, 87; surveillance
 of, 30, 33, 36–37; Taft's interest, 26;
 United Kingdom, 28–29; Villa and,
 30, 32; wealth, 26, 29; white slavery
 charge, 37; white supremacists, 25–26;
 white women, 2, 27, 29; Willard fight,
 27–28, 30
- Johnson, James Russell: fighting in Ti-
 juana, 135
- Johnson, James Weldon: on German inter-
 marriage, 175; on Houston mutineers,
 76; NAACP, 76; tools for Negroes,
 244n. 97
- Johnson, Milbank: Mexican agitation, 132
- Johnson, Sargent: Mexican trips, 189
- Jones, Anthony: on Ellis's colony in Mex-
 ico, 23
- Jones, Gus: on black emigration to Mex-
 ico, 84
- Jones, Morris Hunter: on Naco (Arizona),
 59
- Jordan, David Starr: Negro troops in win-
 ning the West, 96
- Jordan, William G.: Woodrow Wilson's use
 of black soldiers, 93
- Jorgensen, Mita: on Jack Johnson, 26–27
- Juarez, Benito: Indian raids into U.S., 21
- Juarez (Mexico): drug smuggling, 64;
 racial segregation lacking, 55, 56;
 shooting of an American immigration
 officer, 136
- Kadalie, Clements: *The Messenger*, 85
- Kahlo, Frida: Catlett and, 190
- Kansas: Negro regiments, 117
- Katz, Friedrich: U.S.'s anti-Indian wars,
 158; on Villa's hair, 10
- Kay, E. B.: on black emigrants to Mexico,
 84
- Kelley, James: in Mexico, 33
- Kerouac, Jack: Mexico, 189
- Key, Mr. and Mrs. J. B.: emigration to
 Mexico, 81
- King, George: German propaganda, 168;
 migration from the South, 113
- King, Ruth Nash: black life in El Paso, 57;
 on Ku Klux Klan, 66
- King, William: on Chicano soldiers, 120
- Kipling, Rudyard: Negroes quoting, 8
- Knights of the Golden Circle: empire-
 building for slave owners, 18
- Knox, Philander C.: on Japanese purchas-
 ing Baja California, 176–177
- Kristof, Nicholas D.: settlement of the
 Great Plains, 90
- Ku Klux Klan: approval of, 134; border-
 land between U.S. and Mexico, 65–66;
 password, 65; rise of, 73; Texas, 69
- Kurashige, Scott Tadao: Los Angeles's early
 black settlers, 13; racial hostility in Los
 Angeles, 51
- Kuroiwa, Shuroku: Randolph and, 178–
 179
- La Botz, Daniel: on draft dodgers, 126
- Labadie, Joseph: Shillady and, 71
- Lanham, Samuel W.T.: petition presented
 to, 52
- Lansing, Robert: on cattle smuggling, 64;
 Zimmerman Telegram's authenticity,
 156–157
- Laredo (Texas): black population, 61, 87;
 rumors of uprisings, 159; sabotage in,
 158
- Las Cruces (New Mexico): Chicano loy-
 alty, 118–119
- Latin America: Japan, 187
- Latino soldiers: reliance on, 110
- Latinos: defined, 193n. 1 (intro); El Paso at-
 tack on, 103–104. *See also* Chicanos;
 Hispanics; Mexican Americans
- Lawrence, Martin: in *Blue Streak*, 192
- League for Democracy: McKaine and,
 167; McKinney and, 246n. 121; Negro
 soldiers, 167
- Leal, Pablo: thefts, 129

- Lee, C. C. ("Kid Lee"): drug smuggling, 63
- Left, the: support for Mexican Revolution, 140
- Leftwich, T. B.: on Chicano soldiers, 121
- Leiker, James N.: on Flipper, 40; Mexico to African Americans, 14–15; on Negro soldiers in the borderlands, 97
- Lewis, Percy: AWOL, 220n. 12
- Liberia: emigration of blacks to, 21
- Liberty Army for Races and People: Plan of San Diego, 162
- Lippmann, Walter: Du Bois and, 153
- Lira, Vincent: Carranzista, 167
- Lopez, R. W.: El Paso Negroes, 55
- Lordsburg (New Mexico): Chicano loyalty, 119–120
- Los Angeles (California): African American population, 190; Du Bois on, 52; early black settlers, 13; Japanese in, 186; Jim Crow, 250n. 43; Latino population, 190; mayoral race (2001), 191; NAACP chapter, 50; racial hostility, 51–52; on Somerville, 51
- Los Angeles Times*: African Americans in Los Angeles, 51; on Baja colonization, 82–83
- Louisiana: enticement of Negroes by Germany, 170; rumors of black migration to Mexico, 168
- Lower California. *See* Baja California
- Lower California Mexican Land & Development Company: Baja colonization, 82
- Lowery, Henry: killing by, 74
- Lundy, Benjamin: Negro colony in New Mexico, 15, 198n. 16
- Lynching: arming against, 77, 92; of Cabiness, 77; of Frank (Leo), 121; Georgia, 52–53, 121; Germany, 173; Japanese publication on, 178; of Mexicans in U.S., 102, 127; of Negro soldiers, 75; picture of, 161; recommended policy, 133–134; Somerville on, 50; Texas, 52–53, 72, 74, 76–77, 161; of Washington (Jesse), 74, 79; Wells–Barnett on, 160
- Macbeth, Hugh: Baja colonization, 82–83
- Mandel, William: on race in California, 52
- Mariscal, Natividad: "mixed" family, 205n. 4
- Markham, Louis: in Mexico, 33
- Marshall, S. L. A.: desertion among Indian fighters, 91; on El Paso, 66
- Marshall (Texas): gun sales to African Americans, 78–79
- Marvin X: Mexico, 190
- Marxism: *The Crusader*, 85
- Matthews, Frank: gun sales to African Americans, 78
- Matthews, J. P.: on Great Migration, 117
- Maurry, Matthew Fontaine: Confederate negotiations with Mexico, 7; honors, 194n. 24; in Mexico, 19; U.S. Naval Academy, 194n. 24
- Maximilian, Ferdinand Joseph: Confederate veterans, 19; contracting for slaves, 19; France and, 7
- May, Karl: Native Americans, 174
- McAdoo, William G.: Flipper and, 39
- McCann, Irving Goff: prediction concerning Japan, 179
- McJunkin, George: Mexicans and, 47
- McKaine, Osceola E.: League for Democracy, 167; organizing black officers, 166–167
- McKay, Hunter: prisoners of war, 150
- McKinney, T. M.: American League for Democracy, 246n. 121
- Merchant, James E.: on Chicano soldiers, 120
- Merrigo, General: Sanborn–Johnson encounter, 35
- Merrill, Miles: *Birth of a Nation* banning, 9
- Mers, Gilbert: longshore work in Brownsville (Texas), 185–186
- Messenger, The*: Carranza and, 85–86; contributors, 85; Japanese publication on lynching, 178; racial prejudice in Mexico, 86; Sanborn–Johnson encounter, 86; socialism, 85
- Mexican Americans: African Americans, 5, 46; defined, 193n. 1 (intro); El Paso

- (Texas), 9; enticement by Germany, 175; enticement by Mexico, 163–164; Flipper and dispossession of, 3, 39–40, 128; Mexico distinguished from, 191; Negro soldiers, 128; New Mexico, 185; relations with African Americans, 9, 46–49, 55–57, 58, 61–62, 189, 191; rights for, 127–128, 159; “white,” 55. *See also* Chicanos; Hispanics; Latinos; Tejanos
- Mexican Consuls: expectations of support from Mexican Americans, 4; in lives of Mexican Americans, 194n. 15
- Mexican Revolution: Afrikaners in, 138; antiforeigner sentiment, 24; arrest of U.S. sailors, 144; black solidarity with, 35–36, 70; Brownsville Affair, 99; deaths, 5; exiles, attraction to, 137; filibusters in, 137–138; Flipper on intervention, 42–43; Germany, 7; impact on U.S. investments, 4–5, 242n. 73; Japan, 7; Johnson’s solidarity with, 2, 35–36; killings of Negroes, 103; killings of U.S. citizens, 129, 144; land seized by U.S. (1846), 7, 156; Left’s support, 140; to Negroes, 6; oppression, 5; Punitive Expedition (*see* Mexican Revolution, U.S. military involvement in); racist violence, 102–103; spying by Mexico, 139–140; spying by U.S., 139; Texas during, 69; waning of its influence, 73; Zimmerman in, 172
- Mexican Revolution, U.S. military involvement in, 133–155; 1914 incursion, 144–145; Buffalo Soldiers, 74, 93, 96, 103; Carrizal, battle of, 74, 136–137, 146–155, 234n. 110; Chihuahua, conditions in, 148–149; cross-border raids, commencement of, 138; dress rehearsal for WWI, 148; firsts, 146; Flipper on, 42–43, 136; laughing and singing in the face of death, 151–152; motion picture footage, 146; motorized vehicles, 146; Negroes allied with Mexicans, 135–137; press reports, 150; prisoners of war, 149–150, 153; pursuit of Villa, 96, 132, 147, 149, 235n. 132
- Mexican War (1846–1848): Mexicans’ memories, 101; Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 40
- Mexicans: Americans to, 101; in Arizona, 118, 122, 124; in Bisbee (Arizona), 122; Buffalo Soldiers, 90, 92, 213n. 1; in California, 123, 132; depiction in the borderlands, 103; in Douglas (Arizona), 95; labor militancy, 107–108; lynching in U.S., 102, 127; memories of the Mexican War, 101, 123; miners/mining, 122; in New Mexico, 118, 119–120, 124; in Nogales (Arizona), 122; old Mexico Mexicans (*see* Chicanos); relations with African Americans, 92, 98, 102, 103, 128, 154–155, 182; in Rodeo (New Mexico), 118; in San Diego (Texas), 159; in Texas, 16; in Yuma (Arizona), 122
- Mexico: abolition of slavery, 6, 13–14; African American artists, 188–190; African-American colonies, 21–24, 81–85, 198n. 16; to African Americans, 14–15, 82, 187–190; Afro-Mexicans, 13, 15; American ambassador, 101; American expansion into underdeveloped world, 4–5; American surveillance of Japanese, 177; anarchism, 70; black fugitives in, 16, 48; Bolshevism, 81; Chinese in, 177; Científicos, 32; Civil War (U.S.), 18–19; color line, 13; Confederate negotiations, 7; Confederate veterans, 19; control of, 179; deserters in, 136; draft dodgers in, 126; emigration of blacks to, 6, 10–11, 21–24, 81, 84–85, 183, 191, 251n. 53; employment in, 48; enticement of African Americans, 164–165; enticement of Mexican Americans, 163–164; enticement of Native Americans, 158–159; Euro-Americans in, 191–192; Flipper and, 39, 44, 45; France, 19; German agents in, 171–171; Germans in, 172, 176, 180; Germany, 31, 62, 105, 166, 169–170, 171; independence from Spain, 13; Indians in, 15, 17–18, 101–102, 127, 215n.

Mexico (*Continued*)

- 28; interest in attracting U.S. Negroes, 16; Japan, 62, 171, 175, 176, 187; Japanese in, 176, 177; Jews, 217n. 72; Johnson (Jack) and, 24, 25, 28, 30, 31, 33–36, 45; land laws, 39–40; Mexican Americans distinguished from, 191; Mormons in, 133; oil fields, 95, 144–145, 183; ownership of, 129, 247n. 130; Plan of San Diego, 162, 168; political dissidents, 190; population (1910, 1920), 5; racism, 2, 14, 32, 82, 86, 87, 101–103, 191, 198n. 21; raids by Texans, 19–20; Shipman on, 5; as a symbol, 192; United States, 170–171; U.S. investments, 4–5, 242n. 73; U.S. residents in, 133–134, 191–192; water works in, 131; “whites” in, 101–102; Yaquis in, 95–96, 123, 215n. 28. *See also* Borderland between U.S. and Mexico
- Mexico City: Johnson (Jack) and, 24, 25, 31, 33, 34–35; violence in, 103
- Mijares, Manuel: Johnson (Jack) and, 35, 36
- Miller, Wilbert: on Carrizal, 149
- Mingus, Charles: beached whales, 189; Mexico, 10; Nogales (Arizona), 189
- Miscegenation: Hills on, 47. *See also* Antimiscegenation laws
- Mississippi: barring Negroes from military service, 117; emigration of blacks from, 114; enticement of Negroes by Germany, 170; rumors of black migration to Mexico, 168–169; rumors of uprisings, 170
- Mitchell, Joni: Mingus’s death, 189
- Moens, Herman: Mexican Revolution, 169
- Monsen, Frederick L.: on Villa, 10
- Montano, Juan: with Yaquis, 137
- Montejano, David: violence in South Texas, 161
- Moore, D. H.: encounter with Johnson, 34–35
- Mormons: in Mexico, 133
- Mosely, Jesse: Plan of San Diego, 164–165
- Moton, R. R.: on Houston mutineers, 75; *The Messenger*, 85; Washington (Booker T.) and, 75
- Mudd, Sydney: names of Carrizal veterans, 155
- Murphy, Pat: photography military installations, 169
- Murray, William H.: control of Mexico, 179; on ownership of Mexico, 247n. 130
- NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People): 24th Infantry, 80–81; Bisbee (Arizona) chapter, 58; Cabiness lynching, 77; *The Crisis*, 7; Du Bois and, 52; German propaganda among Negroes, 173; Houston mutineers, 80; Johnson (James Weldon) and, 76; Los Angeles (California) chapter, 50; lynching of a Mexican in U.S., 127; membership growth, 73; on Negro sympathizers with Mexico, 136–137; Pickens and, 85; prominent Negroes, 80; Shillady and, 69, 72; Somerville and, 50; Texas, 69, 72–73; Tucson (Arizona) chapter, 58–59; vigilance committees, 80–81; women, 72–73; Young and, 154
- Naco (Arizona): border-crossing Japanese, 62; drug smuggling, 63–64; fighting in, 144; Japanese in, 175–176, 245n. 102; Jones on, 59; Mexican population, 207n. 49; Negro soldiers, 59
- National security: equality, 112; racial reform, 6–7; white supremacy, 181
- Native American soldiers: authorization for, 123; Mescalero Apaches, 123; recruitment by U.S., 123–124
- Native Americans: 175, 158; anarchism, 102, 127; Apaches, 90, 157, 158, 162, 174; arming them, debate about, 124; black colonization of Indian lands, 83–84; Buffalo Soldiers, 73–74, 88–90; Cheyennes, 97; Cocopahs, 137; Comanches, 17, 90, 94, 174; Davis and, 17; enticement by Germany, 175; entice-

Index

- ment by Mexico, 158–159; Germans and, 174–175; Huerta as example, 127; Kiowas, 17, 90, 175; land ownership, 6; May and, 174; Mescalero Apaches, 90, 97, 123; in Mexico, 15, 17–18, 101–102, 127, 215n. 28; Negroes, 157; Papago Indians, 83–84; Pima, 158; Plan of San Diego, 157, 162; racial prejudice, 50; Reconstruction, 94; Seminoles, 17–18, 20–21, 90; slave ownership by, 91; in southwest, 17–18; unification of, 158; Yaquis (*see* Yaqui Indians)
- Natus, Frank: death of, 98
- Nau, John Frederick: German attitude toward slavery, 173–174
- Neal, William: personal success, 60
- “Negro problem”: blaming Germany, 166
- Negro World*: Garvey and, 183; limitations on emigration by Negroes, 183
- Negroes: defined, 193n. 1 (intro). *See also* African American soldiers; African Americans
- Nelson, Alice Dunbar: *The Messenger*, 85
- Nelson, Byron: draft dodger, 105
- New Mexico: African American–Mexican American relations, 58; all-black towns, 61; beating of Chicano soldiers, 121–122; blacks in, 58; Chicanos, 118–119; diversity, 104–105; draft dodgers, 107; early black settlers, 12; enlistment of Anglos, 124; Hispanics in, 171; Jim Crow laws, 57; Mexican Americans, 4, 185; Mexicans in, 118, 119–120, 124; miners/mining, 71, 119; mines, 58; Negro colonies, 15; Negro soldiers, 8; Negroes, 47; Pueblo Revolt (1680), 12; radicalism, 71; raids in 1890s, 157; recruitment of National Guard, 124; school segregation, 185; Senator from, 3; slavery, 18; social equality, 128; statehood, 66; United States Army in, 104–105; Villa’s raid, 8, 76, 124, 125–126; walking from Georgia to, 61
- New Orleans (Louisiana): emigration of blacks to Mexico, 24, 81, 94; racism, 100
- New York: militia on borderland, 125
- New York Amsterdam*: on Jack Johnson, 27
- New York City: German spies, 171
- New York Commoner*: mob justice in Texas, 78
- New York Sun*: on Boyd’s leadership, 151; deserters in Mexico, 136; rioting in Del Rio (Texas), 142–143
- New York Telegram*: arming against lynching, 77
- New York Times*: Buffalo Soldiers, 142; Johnson–Dempsey fight, 181
- New York Tribune*: recruitment in the borderlands, 124–125
- New York World*: 24th Infantry, 130
- Newark Sunday Ledger*: labor shortages, 106
- Newton, Adolph: on “Little Georgia,” 187–188
- Nielsen, Ernest D.: Negro friends, 133
- Nixon, Drusilla: African American–Mexican American relations, 55; doctor husband, 54; segregation in El Paso, 53–54
- Nixon, Richard: Brownsville Affair, 98
- Nobles, Laura: church services in Tucson, 61–62
- Nogales (Arizona): assault on (1918), 167; drug smuggling, 63–64; Du Bois on, 53; fighting in, 144; labor shortages, 106; Mexicans in, 122, 130; Mingus and, 189; “mixed” couples, 48; Negro soldiers, 53; school segregation, 53
- North Carolina: communications with Negroes, 115, 168; Council of Defense, 115, 168; draft dodgers, 113; enticement of Negroes by Germany, 170; German spies, 171
- Obregón, Alvaro: black immigrants to Mexico, 84–85; Negro leaders, 182
- Old Mexico Mexicans. *See* Chicanos
- Olmstead, Frederick Law: on slavery in the West, 15–16
- Olney, Richard: Flipper and, 39

- O'Pettigrew, Julius: emigration to Mexico, 10–11
- Orozco, Jose Clemente: African American–Mexican American relations, 189
- Ortiz, Esteven: Mexican enticement of Native Americans, 158
- Otis, Harrison: appeal for troops, 138
- Ottley, Roi: on Mexicans and Negroes, 46
- Owen, Chandler: *The Messenger*, 85; in Mexico, 182
- Palmer, A. Mitchell: assassination target, 70
- Panama: Johnson's visit, 36
- Parks, Bernard: tenure as police chief, 191
- Patterson, Louise: smoking, 188
- Payne, John: in Mexican Revolution, 229n. 27
- Payne, Munro: supplying Mexican insurgents, 136
- Pena, Angel Garcia: Yaqui hatred of whites, 158
- Peralta, M. R.: on Mexican Americans in New Mexico, 185
- Perez, General Juan: Johnson (Jack) and, 35, 36
- Pershing, John: on Apache Scouts, 123; aviators, 149; Carrizal, battle of, 148, 150; execution of rapists, 154; on Villa's raid, 125–126
- Pewewardy, Cornel: on Buffalo Soldiers, 90
- Phillips, Aurelia: life in El Paso, 57
- Phoenix (Arizona): rumors of uprisings, 161; threats against Mexican consul, 186
- Pickens, William: *The Messenger*, 85; NAACP, 85
- Pico, Pio: Yankee invasion of California, 15
- Pirtleville (Arizona): Negro soldiers, 106
- Pisaña, Aniceto: Carranzista, 167; raids by, 160
- Plan of San Diego, 157–180; Alperovich on, 172; Apaches, 157, 162; authenticity, 157, 172, 237n. 9; black militancy, 164; borderland between U.S. and Mexico, 236n. 7; Carranza and, 159, 172; enticement of African Americans, 164–166, 170, 171, 173, 175–179; enticement of Mexican Americans, 163–164, 175; enticement of Native Americans, 158–159, 175; Fall on, 236n. 7; fear of Negro uprisings, 168; fear of Negroes with guns, 166; Germany, 157, 167, 168; Japan, 157, 168; Japan in, 177–178; Japanese–Mexican–German effort to distract U.S. from Europe, 170–171; Liberty Army for Races and People, 162; Mexican government, 162, 168; Mexican land seized by U.S. (1846), 7; Native Americans, 157, 162; Negroes in, 157, 162, 180; origin, 157, 243n. 77; precursor, 16; prisoners of war, 162; Ramos and, 162–163; Rudenko on, 172; rumors of black migration to Mexico, 168–169; rumors of re-enslavement, 169; rumors of uprisings, 159, 161–162, 170, 240n. 61; signers, 163; Sutherland on, 161–162; Texas, 157; in tune with the times, 159; white supremacy, 163
- Pohle, Egmont W.: borderland armies, 123
- Pollock, Jackson: Mexico, 189
- Porras, Charles: Mexican–African American relations, 128; racism, 100
- Port Isabel (Texas): Negroes barred from entering, 186
- Pou, Edward W.: German–Mexican relations, 171
- Prattier, A. L.: on Mexicans in Arizona, 118
- Price, Caryl Ap Rhys: filibuster, 138
- Princeton University: Negroes, 156
- Prisoners of war: Plan of San Diego, 162; Spencer's experience, 147; U.S. involvement in Mexican revolution, 149–150, 153
- Progressive Education Association: colonization of Arizona, 83–84
- Pullman Company: jobs for African Americans, 51

Index

- Punitive Expedition. *See* Mexican Revolution, U.S. military involvement in
- Race: nationality *vs.*, 59; "white" and "American," 50–51
- Race avengers: Johnson (Jack), 35; Villa, 146–147
- Racial microclimates: borderland between U.S. and Mexico, 57–58
- Racial reform: national security concerns, 6–7
- Racial violence: borderland between U.S. and Mexico, 157; Mexican Revolution, 102–103; Texas, 73–74, 77–78, 92, 102–103
- Racism: anti-Indian bias in U.S., 127; anti-Japanese hysteria in U.S., 176; anti-Mexican racism, 159; borderland between U.S. and Mexico, 59; France, 86; Germany, 173; Japan's fight against, 179; Mexican Revolution, 102–103; Mexico, 2, 14, 32, 82, 86, 87, 101–103, 191, 198n. 21; Negro soldiers' defiance of racist conventions, 141; New Orleans, 100; Texas, 73–74, 77–78, 92, 102–103, 163; United States, 87; United States Navy, 100–101; Washington, D.C., 86
- Railroads: black employment, 62
- Ramos, Basilio: biography, 163; border-crossing, 249n. 29; indictment of, 162–163
- Randolph, A. Philip: Kuroiwa and, 178–179; the Left, 86–87; *The Messenger*, 85
- Ray, Joe: dodging bullets, 187
- Reagan, Ronald Wilson: Marvin X and, 190
- Reconstruction: Buffalo Soldiers, 94; Du Bois on, 153; emigration of blacks, 21, 24; Native Americans, 94
- Reed, John: a friend's joy, 134
- Reynolds, A. V.: figure cut by, 230n. 33
- Reynolds, Matthew G.: Flipper and, 40
- Rhodes, Gus: Johnson (Jack) and, 29
- Rice, Cushman A.: on mixed bouts in Cuba, 27–28
- Rice, J. B.: on black emigrants to Mexico, 84
- Richardson, Tracy: overseas fighting, 231n. 49
- Richardson Corporation: Yaqui land, 95
- Rimm, Walter: freedom for blacks in Mexico, 14
- Rio Grande River: as a border, 16–17
- Robinson, Dudley: IWW in Baja California, 135
- Rodeo (New Mexico): Mexicans in, 118
- Rodriguez, Antonio: torching of, 102
- Rodriguez, Sebastian: brief biography, 12
- Rogers, J. A.: *The Messenger*, 85; Texas Revolution, 14
- Roosevelt, Theodore: Brownsville Affair, 98; on Japan-Mexico relations, 176; on Japanese people, 176
- Roswell, Irving P.: on Japan's intentions, 180
- Rudenko, B. T.: on Plan of San Diego, 172
- Sacco, Nicola: Mexico, 70
- Sainz, Prospero: thefts, 129
- Samford, Tandy: Villa spy, 139
- San Antonio Inquirer*: Houston mutineers, 75
- San Antonio (Texas): gun sales to African Americans, 78; rumors of uprisings, 159; runaways from, 17; Villa sympathizers, 129
- San Diego (California): "Little Georgia," 187–188
- San Diego (Texas): Buckley and, 81; Mexicans in, 159; planned massacre of white men, 81; revolt planned in, 157. *See also* Plan of San Diego
- San Francisco (California): Mexican Consul, 4
- San Ygnacio (Texas): attack on (1916), 167
- Sanborn, Walter: encounter with Jack Johnson, 34–35, 86, 202n. 34
- Schengler, W. S.: military preparedness on the borderlands, 128
- Schumpert, J. P.: draft exemptions for Negroes, 114

- Schuyler, George: *The Messenger*, 85
- Scott, Emmett: on protests against Negro sentinels, 111; Washington (Booker T.) and, 111
- Seattle (Washington): rumors of uprisings, 169
- Segregation: Albuquerque (New Mexico), 55; El Paso (Texas), 47, 53–54, 55, 56; Negro soldiers' resistance to, 56; New Mexico, 185; Nogales (Arizona), 53; Washington, D.C., 86, 110; Wilson (Woodrow) and, 110
- Seminoles: African Americans, 90; Mexico, 17–18; runaway slaves, 17; "Seminole Maroons," 20; "Seminole Negro Indian Scouts," 20–21
- Shauer, I. L.: bombings of Japanese, 186–187
- Shepherd, R. E. L.: Ku Klux Klan membership, 65
- Sheppard, Morris: Mexican sympathizers, 122–123
- Shillady, John: assassination target, 69; beating, 72–73, 77; on Christianity, 71–72; equality, 72; Labadie and, 71; NAACP, 69, 72; socialism, 71; White on, 72
- Shipman, Charles: on Jack Johnson, 32; on Mexico, 5
- Sinclair, Upton: caricature of Negro soldiers in *Stars and Stripes*, 134
- Singleton, George A.: NAACP membership, 81
- Siquieros, David: African American–Mexican American relations, 189; Catlett and, 190
- Slavery: abolition in Mexico, 6, 13–14; abolition in U.S., 6; Adams's defense of slaves, 6; Belize (British Honduras), 137; German attitude toward, 173–174; Maximilian's plans, 19; New Mexico, 18; rumors of re-enslavement, 169; runaway slaves, 14–17; slave ownership by Native Americans, 91; in Texas, 13–18; Texas Revolution, 14; in the West, 15–16
- Smalley, George H.: *Birth of a Nation* banning, 9
- Smith, C. S.: reducing race friction, 166
- Smith, Clarence: self-mutilation, 183
- Smith, Jerry: in Mexico, 33
- Smith, John: self-mutilation, 106
- Smith, Logan: white supremacy, 66–67
- Social equality: Flores Magon and, 128; New Mexico, 128
- Socialism: African Americans, 69; civil rights, 90; Du Bois and, 72; *The Messenger*, 85; Shillady and, 71
- Somerville, J. Alexander: on Los Angeles, 51; on lynching, 50; NAACP, 50
- SoRelle, James: slavery in Texas, 14
- South, the: black emigration from, 115; borderland compared to, 124; failure to report for induction, 225n. 76; Great Migration from, 113–115, 117; opposition to Negroes in the military, 146; recruitment, 112; volunteers from, 126
- South Carolina (Palmetto State): black enlistment, 118; Council of Defense, 112; distribution of foodstuffs to Negroes, 111–112; draft exemptions, 114; enticement of Negroes by Germany, 170; militia, 116–117; quota for troops, 126; rumors of black migration to Mexico, 168
- Spencer, Buck: as Villa's prisoner, 147
- Spilsbury, Lem H.: on captivity, 149
- Spingarn, J. E.: counterintelligence in Negro communities, 165; Du Bois and, 165; German propaganda among Negroes, 173; incendiary pamphlet, 165
- Stansell, Christine: on Goldman, 69
- Stars and Stripes*: caricature of Negro soldiers, 134
- Stevens, Montague: foreigners in U.S. Army, 104
- Stevenson, Alva: family history, 48
- Stono's Rebellion: descendants, 119
- Stuart, Sr.: emigration plans, 87
- Studley, Elmer E.: enthusiasm for war, 145

- Sunday Herald* (Nogales, Arizona): manager, 40
- Sutherland, John: on Plan of San Diego, 161–162
- Sweet Sweetback's Baadassss Song* (film): ending, 251n. 53
- Taft, William Howard: appeals for troops, 138; on California, 70; interest in Jack Johnson, 26; mobilization along the border, 141
- Tampico (Mexico): arrest of U.S. sailors, 144; German agents in, 171; oil fields near, 144–145
- Tapia, Primo: IWW, 209n. 4
- Teapot Dome scandal: Fall and, 143–144, 182
- Tejanos: aid to runaway slaves, 15; hostility toward, 16; opposition to Confederacy, 18
- Terrazas, Joaquin: threats against, 186
- Terrazas, Presbitero D. Manuel: Flipper on, 41
- Texarkana (Texas): Negro radicalism, 80; racist violence, 77
- Texas, 69–81; annexation of (1845), 15; ante-bellum Germans, 174; antimiscegenation laws, 9, 46–47; black disloyalty investigations, 169; chasing blacks in, 57; communication between Mexicans and slaves, 16; in Confederacy, 15; decline in black population, 87; drafting Negroes to avoid drafting whites, 117–118; Du Bois on, 52; enticement of Mexican Americans by Mexico, 163–164; enticement of Negroes by Germany, 170; fear of armed uprising of Negroes, 73; films of Jack Johnson's matches, 26; gun sales to African Americans, 78–79; Houston Mutiny (1917), 74–81; investigations of desertion, 225n. 76; Ku Klux Klan, 69; lynching, 52–53, 72, 74, 76–77, 161; militia, 125; mob justice, 52, 77, 78; murders of Mexicans, 183; NAACP, 69, 72–73; Negro radicalism, 78–79, 80; Negroes barred from entering towns, 186; Plan of San Diego, 157; racism, 163; racist violence, 73–74, 77–78, 92, 102–103; radicalism, 71; raids into Mexico, 19–20; recruitment by Mexico, 163–164; removal of Negro soldiers, 99; Rio Grande border, 16–17; rumors of uprisings, 159, 169; runaway slaves, 14–17; Shillady beating, 72–73, 77; slavery in, 13–18; suppression of Negro press, 79–80; surveillance of blacks, 79–80; Tejanos, 15, 16, 18; violence in South Texas, 160–161; weapons, 73
- Texas Rangers: Negro press to, 84; surveillance of blacks, 79–80
- Texas Revolution (1835–1836): slavery's role, 14, 15
- Thorpe, Cal A.: in Mexican Revolution, 231n. 49
- Threadgill-Dennis, Clara L.: on Houston mutineers, 75
- Tijuana (Mexico): fighting in, 135; Newport Bar, 189; Tucker on, 189
- Tillman, Ben: deportation of blacks from Arizona, 84; South Carolina militia, 116
- Tormel, José Maria: abolitionism in Mexico, 13
- Troy, Theodore: on Mexico, 82
- Trumbo, Chris: on Euro-Americans in Mexico, 191–192
- Tucker, Billy: on Tijuana, 189
- Tucson (Arizona): African American–Mexican American relations, 61–62; black population, 60; founding, 12; hostility to Jews, 66; Ku Klux Klan, 65–66; NAACP chapter, 58–59
- Turner, Henry: emigration to Mexico, 22; Villa supporter, 139
- United Kingdom: Johnson (Jack) in, 28–29
- United States: abolition of slavery, 6; annexation of Texas (1845), 15; anti-Indian wars, 158; Germany, 170–171;

United States (*Continued*)

- Great Migration from the South, 113–115, 117; Hughes (James Nathaniel) on, 188; Indian raids into, 21; inflammation of public opinion, 176; investments in Mexico, 4–5, 242n. 73; Japan, 170–171; Japanese in Mexico, 176; labor shortages, 106; Mexican land seized by U.S. (1846), 7, 156; Mexico, 170–171; national security, 6–7, 112, 181; possibility of a multifront war, 6; race riots (1919), 31; racism, 87; radicalism, 71; Reconstruction, 21, 24, 94; “sandpaper on the nerves,” 188; seizure of Mexican land (1846), 7; settlement of the Great Plains, 90; Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 40; white supremacy in, 6. *See also* Borderland between U.S. and Mexico
- United States Army: 20th Infantry, 122, 136; anti-Semitism, 105; barring Negroes from military service, 117; desertion, 88, 91–92, 113, 130, 136–137, 153, 225n. 76; discharges from, 125–126; draft dodgers, 105–107, 113, 126; draft exemptions, 114–115, 221n. 19; enlistment, 118, 124; expansion into underdeveloped world, 4–5; failure to report for induction, 225n. 76; Flipper’s dismissal, 2, 39; foreigners in, 104; incentive for joining, 143; militia, 116–117, 125, 127, 146; National Guard, 106, 107, 109, 124, 126, 131, 146; in New Mexico, 104–105; re-enlistment, 142; recruitment, 112, 123–125, 127, 132; refusal to perform military service, 115; registration for the draft, 225n. 76; size, 194n. 6. *See also* African American soldiers; Buffalo Soldiers; Chicano soldiers; Latino Soldiers
- United States Customs Service: importance of Negro soldiers, 62
- United States Military Academy (West Point): first black graduate, 2, 38–39
- United States Navy: blacks in, 104; foreigners in, 104; Mexican arrest of U.S. sailors, 144; racism, 100–101
- United States Supreme Court: white primaries, 9
- University of Texas, El Paso: basketball championship, 190
- Uribe, Juan: encouragement of colonization, 82
- Valdinoci, Carlo: Mexico, 70
- Van Peebles, Melvin: *Sweet Sweetback’s Baadassss Song*, 251n. 53
- Vancouver (Canada): Bluett on, 250n. 43
- Vann, Lucille: Mexico travels, 187
- Vanzetti, Bartolomeo: Mexico, 70
- Vardaman, James K.: barring Negroes from military, 117
- Varela, Luis: chasing blacks in Texas, 57
- Vazquez, Jose: thefts, 129
- Velcia, George: Johnson (Jack) and, 29
- Venezuela: Flipper in, 181–182; Japan, 187
- Victorio War (1879–1880): Buffalo Soldiers, 96–97
- Viljoen, Benjamin: Chandler and, 138; Mexican diplomat, 138–139; in New Mexico, 138; Yaqui crusader, 138
- Villa, Pancho: ancestry, 146, 233n. 84; Columbus (New Mexico) raid, 8, 76, 124, 125–126, 145, 147, 172; El Paso (Texas), 9; Flipper and, 42–44, 136; on gringos and others, 147; impersonator of, 147; Japanese delegation to, 246n. 119; Johnson (Jack) and, 30, 32; Katz on, 10; medical chief of staff, 172; Monsen on, 10; Negro features, 10, 44, 146, 204n. 70; Negroes’ fascination with, 10, 146–147; peasant movement, 5; pursuit of, 96, 132, 147, 149, 235n. 132; race avenger, 146–147; Robin Hood analogy, 149; spies for, 139; sympathizers (“Villistas”), 122, 129; vilification, 10
- Villaraigosa, Antonio: candidacy for mayor, 191

- Vincent, Theodore G.: on Guerrero, 13
- Virginia: antimiscegenation laws, 68; black disloyalty investigations, 169; draft dodgers, 106; Negro regiments, 117
- Votam, James J.: on Chicano soldiers, 121
- Waco (Texas): murder of Jesse Washington, 74, 79; rumors of uprisings, 159
- Walker, A'Leila: *Chicago Defender*, 85; *The Messenger*, 85
- Walker, Theodore (James Westerfield): Villa and, 48–49
- Washington, Booker T.: chief aide, 111; discouragement/bitterness among African Americans, 5–6; successor, 75
- Washington, D.C.: protest against Negro soldiers guarding bridges, 110; racism in, 86; segregation in, 86
- Washington, Jesse: lynching of, 74, 79
- Washington, Leona: African American–Mexican American relations, 56–57
- Washita, Haki: border crossing, 62
- Welles, Orson: Mexico, 189
- Wells-Barnett, Ida B.: on reducing lynching, 160
- Wells Willie: Mexico, 190
- West Point: first black graduate, 2, 38–39
- Westberry, R. W.: distribution of foodstuffs to Negroes, 112
- Westerfield, James (Theodore Walker): Villa and, 48–49
- Western United States: blacks in, 51; Japanese in, 247n. 125; Negro soldiers in winning the West, 20–21, 52, 96; opportunities for blacks, 50; racial prejudice, 50–52; radicalism, 71
- White, Charles: Mexican travels, 189
- White, Walter: on Shillady, 72
- White supremacy: armed resistance to, 78–81; borderland between U.S. and Mexico, 66–68, 80; Clifton (Arizona), 67–68; crisis in, 9; deporting blacks from Arizona, 84; Dixiecrats, 146; Hawkins on, 152; Johnson (Jack) and, 25–26; KKK password, 65; Moore–Johnson encounter, 34–35; national security threats, 181; Negroes as defenders of white supremacy, 21, 74, 86–87, 100, 109, 134, 151, 178, 184; “passing” by Negroes, 50; Plan of San Diego, 163; Sanborn–Johnson encounter, 34–35, 202n. 34; Smith’s enforcement, 66–67; standing foursquare against, 178; in United States, 6; Yuma (Arizona), 66–67
- Whitehead, Bert: shooting of, 129
- Whitlock, Mark: congregation of, 190–191
- Wickersham, George: Taft’s interest in Jack Johnson, 26
- Willard, Jess: Jack Johnson fight, 27–28, 30
- Williams, Bert: impersonations of Villa, 147
- Williams, Charles: drug smuggling, 63
- Williams, George Washington: Confederates in Mexico, 7
- Williams, Jos.: draft dodger, 113
- Williams, Reuben: tour guide, 51
- Williams, Spencer: drug smuggling, 65
- Wilson, Henry Lane: on Indians in Mexico, 101–102; on violence in Mexico City, 103
- Wilson, Woodrow: *Birth of a Nation*, 9; *The Crisis* on, 156; German–Mexican relations, 171; Jim Crow, 156; Negro soldiers, 92–93; reports about border conditions, 122; segregation in D.C., 110; Zimmerman Telegram, 156–157, 171
- Wisconsin: draft exemptions, 114; loyalty of Negroes, 116
- Women: NAACP, 72–73
- Woolf, Virginia: change in human character, 5
- World War I: dress rehearsal for, 148; Johnson (Jack) and, 29–30; Negro soldiers, 112–113; Negroes, 156; Zimmerman Telegram, 157
- Wright, Howard: enticement of Mexican Americans by Mexico, 164

Index

- Wright, John E.: draft dodger, 113
Wright, Richard: on Brownsville (Texas), 188; on Mexico, 10, 188
- Yaqui Indians: Buffalo Soldiers, 94, 137; hatred of whites, 158; Hunt on, 95; IWW, 124; lands of, 95, 158; Flores Magon and, 135; in Mexico, 95–96, 123, 215n. 28; Montano and, 137; Native American soldiers, 123; Richardson Corporation, 95; unification of Native Americans, 158; Viljoen and, 138; Villa and, 147
- Young, Charles: at Agua Caliente, 145; Carrizal, battle of, 148; dismissal from Army, 153–154; Du Bois's support, 153–154; NAACP, 154; pursuit of Villa, 235n. 132
- Young, James: on being “white,” 50–51
- Yuma (Arizona): Mexicans in, 122; swindling of Negroes, 185; white supremacy, 66–67
- Zapata, Emiliano: ancestry, 233n. 84; peasant movement, 5
- Zimmerman, Arthur: anti-American activity in Mexico, 172
- Zimmerman Telegram: authenticity of, 156–157; Mexican land seized by U.S. (1846), 7, 156; Wilson (Woodrow) and, 156–157, 171; World War I, 157

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